WE FOUR VILLAGERS.

A TALE

OF

DOMESTIC LIFE IN PENNSYLVANIA.

BY

G. FORT.

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WE FOUR VILLAGERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE KNITTING REVERIE.

A CLEAR, moon-illumined sky beamed brightly over head, the air was keen, cold and bracing. Hills and dales were deeply sleeping beneath a well frozen covering of snow. The sleighing was superb, and drew many from the comforts of

"Ane's ain fireside,"

to enjoy its fleeting pleasures. The young people of the country town of Silveryville, had turned out *en masse*, to meet in merry mood in a sleighing party, and gone to partake of an evening's amusement at the borough of Winterville.

Mrs. Dorothy Dorane sat in her comfortably cushioned, high-backed, rocking chair, near her own neatly furnished fireside.

Her hands were busily engaged in knitting an artistically shaped stocking for one of her numer-

ous nephews, while her thoughts were as actively employed in forming a reverie, of which the following lines will convey to the reader's mind a fac simile.

Yes, she thought, the young folks of Silveryville have all gone to the party at the Borough, and a merry, laughing, dancing, ringing time they will have. I am not there with them. I am here in the home of my forefathers, in the same house in which I was born. There is no peal of merry laughter now, ringing through my lonely room. No one laughs here now. Tick, tick, tick says the old, dark clock in the corner. Tick, tick, tick is the only sound that now breaks the silence of my home. And while it unceasingly goes on, in its solemn song of tick, tick, tick, it seems to say, think, think, think, and in obedience to its constant voice, my mind steadily keeps time with it, and I remember well the days of yore when I was young. In those bygone days I was not alone, for many others were then my fellow inmates of this same room, merrier voices and gladder sounds then drowned the tick, tick, tick of the dark, old clock in the corner.

Father, mother, brothers, sisters, husband and children, other relatives, friends and neighbors ever conspired to over-sound the ticking of the

clock in my room. But now where are they? Some are dead, others have gone to distant homes, and all have left me alone with no other companion than the ticking clock in the corner.

Among the favorite friends of my youth there were three very dear ones, whom I especially loved.

Together we four, in early childhood, gamboled with light and nimble feet on the floor of this same old room, and with merry, laughing shouts its time-honored walls have re-echoed the sounds of our gleesome and noisy mirth. But now I alone am left to occupy it. Together we four, in happy girlhood, attended the same school, where we learned the same lessons. And when the lessons were done, together we four rambled to the green and grassy meadows, where we culled the earliest spring flowers in their prime and matchless beauty, beside the purling, pebbly brook. Together we four played at hide-and-seek among the arches and broken walls of the old stone bridge, which spans the more stately creek, and among the thick bushes that border its rugged, rock-bound shores.

There we spent many happy hours of the long, sunny days of summer. Beyond the meadow and the creek, in the deep wild woods, during

the bright days of Autumn, together we four have hunted nuts, and enjoyed the pleasure of gathering them, quite as much as some older persons now do in collecting gold and silver coins. In Winter's clear and cold days, we four have often passed together many joyous hours in gliding swiftly over the smooth, slippery surface of the ice-bound creek. Together we four, when our school lessons and our school days were ended, have come here in my room to enjoy in social meetings many happy evenings.

Here we met, talked, laughed and sung where now is heard nought but the tick, tick, tick of the dark, old clock in the corner.

The names of my three intimate friends were Belinda May, Emma Krammaul and Minnie Emgreen. Belinda met with a noble youth from the sunny South, he saw, he loved and addressed her; but her parents frowned upon his advances, and prohibited their progress. During several months he lingered in the neighborhood, then he suddenly returned to his distant home. Belinda appeared to view his departure with composed indifference; but not many months elapsed ere the bright bloom of health and beauty faded from her cheeks, her eyes lost their lustre, her steps their elasticity.

CHAPTER II.

THE SEVERED CIRCLE.—THE VILLAGE STORE.

Very soon Belinda ceased to be one of us four, who were so long in the habit of happily meeting here in my sitting room. Time passed away, and with it went the spirit of our own dear Belinda; thus was our circle of us four early friends intruded upon and broken by death.

Sadly I think of her untimely end, and very thankful I feel that I am still alive to hear the tick, tick, ticking of the clock, although I am alone to hear its plaintive voice; and as I listen to it I often meditate on the fates and fortunes of the other two dear friends. Emma Krammaul, also, very soon left us. She was admired by a stranger of high rank. They were married. Soon after their wedding they went to a distant land where they still remain.

About a year after they left us, I was married to one who had been our schoolmate. At the time of our marriage he was an officer in the United States Navy; as he was absent from home the greater part of his time, we never went

to house-keeping. He was wrecked and drowned a few years after our marriage.

One more of us four once gay and happy friends remains for me to remember and describe.

Minnie Emgreen was of low stature, light and delicate in form, her face fair and beautiful, decided her to be the flower of our little flock. One evening we introduced her to our relative, Merton Malvers. He was a handsome, gay young man of agreeable manners. His father was a rich farmer in a distant county. Merton, or as we then called him, "Our Cousin Merton," had enjoyed the advantages of a very good education; he was full of good health and happy spirits; the world seemed to him a fairy field of pleasure, and he was generally a favorite wherever he went. At the time to which I now allude he was not employed in any regular occupation, and had come to Silveryville to visit our family, some of the members of which he had never seen until this, his first visit at our house. He was at first sight impressively struck with the grace and beauty of my dear young friend, Minnie Emgreen. He walked home with her that evening, through the green willow grove which separated her parents' dwelling from ours.

From that time until the end of his visit, they

met almost daily. After he went to his own home though absent from us it appeared he kept his eyes open to the events and circumstances which were transpiring in and around the neighborhood of Silveryville. About half a year after his first visit to us, the country merchant, who conducted all the commercial affairs of Silveryville, came to the conclusion to dispose of his extensive village store. In that store were sold all sorts and all kinds of merchandise. It included among its various contents dry goods, both fancy and staple; all kinds and all sorts of trimmings; pins, needles and threads of all numbers and all colors; woolen, cotton, tow and linen yarns, of all sizes and shades; buttons, hooks and eyes, groceries, teas, sugar and coffee; edibles of many kinds, including crackers, cakes, ginger bread, candies, dried fruits, with a great many other good things that do not always grow on trees in this our cold and uncongenial climate. This same accommodating and good natured store supplied the dear people of Silveryville with every variety of cutlery, large and small, good, bad and indifferent; also, every possible diversity of tin, iron, brass, wooden, glass, china and earthen wares. On its well filled shelves, and in its thickly crowded corners

we could see, huddled together in more confusion than good order, in more utility than beauty, every article we could think of, from a curry comb to a side saddle, from a milk strainer to a butter print, from a shoe peg to a pair of overshoes, from a footstool to a dinner table. Every thing that can be thought of, and many others that are hard to remember, would have to be included in the long inventory which would have to be made before we could describe all the contents of that great and useful, only store of the beautiful Silveryville.

About half a year after Merton Malvers' first visit at our house, this convenient and useful store was offered for sale. As I have already stated, my cousin Merton had his eyes open to the events which were occurring at Silveryville, and he, therefore, soon discovered how matters stood with regard to our store. He seized with alacrity on the event, and made it an apology for paying another visit to our pleasant village.

He came, he saw, and he purchased the great and useful store of Silveryville. Minnie was delighted to meet once more her former admirer. Very soon afterwards his attentions to her were of a marked and decided character; his visits were not agreeable to Minnie's parents, because

they feared his tastes were too trifling and unsettled to permit him ever to become a suitable husband for their precious daughter. They discouraged his visits, and affectionately advised her to shun his attentions. But Minnie was an indulged child from the earlier years of her life, and was now unwilling to submit to the wishes and authority of her parents. She disregarded their earnest requests to avoid the society and attentions of my cousin Merton Malvers. Before the expiration of a year after his return to our village, she one day clandestinely became his wife.

After that, Merton took up his permanent abode in the house of Mr. Emgreen. As Minnie was his only child, and he was a man of wealth, Merton imprudently believed, from the time of his marriage, it was not worth while to make a slave of himself to the irksome duties of his store. Under this erroneous impression he soon became so careless and inattentive to his customers that they began to feel much dissatisfied with the same store, which until then, had ever been usefully and acceptably conducted. One of our keen sighted neighbors, seeing how matters stood between Merton and his customers, wisely opened an opposition place of business, to which people, always fond of a change

and novelty, flocked in such prodigious numbers, that Merton's counters were soon left unvisited by all his former purchasers. The dreariness of an unfrequented store, was, to Merton's lively and sociable feelings, even more intolerable than had been the labor of attending to his customers, when he had them.

This being the case, he very soon grew thoroughly out of patience with what he called the fickleness of Dame Fortune, and sold his store off to the highest bidder. He then indolently resigned himself to the humiliating alternative of very soon becoming entirely dependent upon Mr. Emgreen for the means of supporting himself and his wife.

CHAPTER III.

A VILLAGE FUNERAL.

Two years passed away rather uncomfortably to the members of Mr. Emgreen's family. During these two years Merton's parents died. Their estate was equally divided among their eleven children, and therefore did not amount to

much in value to any one of them. Merton lived jovially upon his means as long as they lasted, without troubling himself with the care of looking out for the future. He intended when they should be entirely exhausted, to apply, through Minnie's gentle influence, for relief to the ample resources of her wealthy and kindly indulgent Father.

Merton's dollars had been by his own mismanagement and extravagance, reduced to a very small amount of cash, when Mr. Emgreen suddenly sickened and died of apoplexy; his funeral caused quite an excitement in our usually calm village. Not only because he was a man of large fortune, and the favorite of an extensive circle of acquaintances, but also on account of his being a Free Mason of a high rank, and was to be buried with Masonic honors. The funeral took place on the third day after his decease, at four o'clock in the afternoon.

On the morning of the day of the funeral, according to a good old-times custom, on the event of a death in the village, the church —for at that time our village owned but one church, in it all the inhabitants of the place were wont to assemble in fraternal harmony, without distinction of sects or creeds—the old church

bell commenced tolling as the sun was beginning to show its upper part above the Eastern horizon. The tolling of the bell continued until the whole orb of day was fully and entirely risen. Then again, the same bell was tolled for about fifteen minutes, at the time of the meeting of the friends at the house of the deceased. Then again, when the funeral appeared in sight of the church, the bell was again tolled, and it continued sending forth its sonorous and sadly-sounding peals upon the quiet village air, until the coffin was borne into the open space in front of the pulpit. There the bier on which it was borne was placed, and the upper half of the coffin-lid, made on hinges for this purpose, was opened, and the face, and nearly the half of the dead one's form, were exposed to the view of the assembled congregation. The coffin remained opened, and in front of the pulpit—the high old fashioned pulpit—hanging over it until the funeral sermon was preached. This attention was invariably paid to persons of all ranks and all ages, who were in any way connected with the church.

Soon after sunrise, a messenger was sent from the house of mourning, to the door of every other dwelling—rich and poor—in the village, with the following verbal message.

It was then verbal, for at that time printing presses were not as abundant as they are now. In this more favored year of our welcome 1860, it is customary to send the message in print, in the form of a letter, but in those by-gone days, to which reference is here made, it was invariably couched in the following words :

" Mr., Mrs. or Miss So-and-so, yourself and family are respectfully invited to attend the funeral of Mr. Emgreen, this afternoon at four o'clock."

This message was delivered in a loud and hurried voice at the entrance of the dwelling. Having safely announced it, the bearer hastened away without using any other words or ceremony, to repeat the doleful sounds in the ears of the next door neighbors. At the present time there is more variety, and sometimes more ceremony, manifested in the composition of the printed funeral invitations, according to the taste and literary ability, of the person who may happen to be appointed their writer.

On the day of Mr. Emgreen's funeral, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the old church bell solemnly tolled the hour of invitation. Then, in a few minutes, vehicles of all styles and sizes began to move into the one, long, front street of

Silveryville, from the surrounding country. Then well dressed Silveryvillites, of both sexes, and of nearly all ages, tastefully and with unusual care attired in their best holiday robes, with solemn looks and steady paces, began to leave their own quiet dwellings, and assemble in one vast crowd around the large and handsomely furnished parlors, halls and bed-rooms of Mr. Emgreen's large mansion.

Meanwhile the Free Masons of the village, were assembled in their hall, where they were costuming themselves in their splendidly glittering regalia. When they were all appropriately equiped, they marched in procession, two by two, from their hall to the house of their deceased brother; they entered the room in which the bier and coffin were standing, and performed over them some mysterious ceremonies, which no one but themselves comprehended. They then took a silent leave of the remains of their deceased brother, and marched out of the house, in the same manner in which they had entered it, and stood in front of the mansion. Two of their number held the glittering blades of two long swords over the front entrance, while the corpse was carried out under them, and they did the same at the church door, when it entered there.

Four of the Free Masons walked beside the coffin as pall-bearers, although it was without a pall. As the dwelling place of Mr. Emgreen, was within view of the church, as soon as his remains were borne outside his door, the church bell began to ring, and it tolled on, and on, until the coffin entered the church. The funeral procession was led by the Free Masons. After the corpse walked a long train of mourners who were dressed in deep black. The widow was supported between the arms of her daughter Minnie and her son-in-law. Then followed the large multitude of assembled neighbors, without forming themselves into procession, on account of the proximity of the church to the dwelling.

Although the sacred edifice was an extensive building, it could not hold more than half the assembly. The other half congregated around the open doors and windows, to listen to the funeral discourse, which was delivered in a clear and remarkably distinct manner. By the time it was half done, the surrounding fence-posts and tree-trunks had fastened to them the bridles and reins of other people's horses, who had thus lately arrived from their distant homes in other towns, or in the country near them. These late arrivals waited patiently for the conclusion of

the sermon, to go into the church and take a last look at their departed friend, before the final screwing down of the coffin-lid. Meanwhile they joined the listening crowd around the doors or windows, or they silently sauntered into the cemetery, where they paid sober visits to the grass-grown graves of other gone-before friends or relations.

The funeral oration occupied a full hour in its delivery. The greater part of it was spent in exhorting the audience to prepare for eternity, to consider attentively the uncertainty of life, the importance of being ever in a state of readiness to depart hence to a better and a higher world, according to the example of their deceased friend and neighbor. Then followed many words in praise of the character and disposition of the deceased.

During this part of the sermon, as usual on all similar occasions, the age to the very day of his death, and his name were clearly announced.

When the sermon was ended, a long hymn was sung, then a longer prayer was offered at the throne of the heavenly grace. Then the Benediction was pronounced. The out side hearers then walked in and around the coffin to take their last leave of its occupant. It was

then borne to the grave in the same order in which it had been carried to the church.

When the coffin was lowered into the open sepulchre, the minister uncovered his head and offered another prayer, then he gave out verse by verse the lines of the following:

HYMN.

"Hark, from the tombs a doleful sound,
My ears attend the cry,
Ye living men, come view the ground,
Where you must shortly lie.

Princes, this clay must be your bed,
In spite of all your towers,
The tall, the wise, the reverend head,
Must lie as low as ours.

Great God is this our certain doom,
And are we still secure,
Still walking downward to the tomb,
And yet prepare no more!"

* * * *

This solemn hymn was most heartily sung by the majority of the surrounding multitude. While the singing of the hymn was progressing, four well dressed men stood near the side of the grave, and with large shovels, they filled up the grave very rapidly. Before the hymn was concluded, the grave was filled, mounded up and

smoothed, with the backs of the shovels. As soon as they were done singing, the minister put on his hat, and led the way to the house of the late Mr. Emgreen; he was followed by the mourners, and a large company of friends, who were on terms of intimacy with his family. They entered the house, and remained there until after supper.

While the funeral ceremonies were taking place at the church, other events of a very different and more substantial nature were transpiring in the kitchens and lower rooms of the house of mourning. No sooner had the funeral procession taken its departure towards the church, than a busy, bustling scene commenced. The head cook of the village, Editha Rox—like other villages in the good old times that are past we had our head cook—who was well skilled in the art which I fear kills as many as it cures, the art of luxurious cooking.

Editha Rox, with the assistance of at least a half dozen other hired helps, or as they were then called "maids," went bravely to work at the Herculean operation of preparing supper for at least a hundred or more people. By the time the mourners and their friends returned from the grave-yard, four long tables were arranged in the

dining and sitting rooms of the hospitable mansion. They were soon surrounded by a large company, among whom were seated all the mourners, not excepted even the widow and daughter of the deceased. Their absence from the tables would have been viewed by the guests as an unpardonable breach of hospitality. The meal was eaten in solemn silence; but none the less heartily for the quietude which surrounded the tables.

The only beverages used were very strong tea and coffee, fresh rich milk, and cold water from the spring.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SLEIGHING PARTY.—MRS. D. DORANE.

When the sumptuous and duly appreciated meal was concluded, the guests quietly departed to their own homes. Some took a formal leave of the widow and her daughter, while others did not; but left the house without any ceremony.

Just at this point of Mrs. Dorothy Dorane's evening, or rather of her night's reverie, the distant jingle of merry sleigh-bells broke the silence

of the waning night. Mrs. Dorane listened a moment, then exclaimed,

"Ah there they come at last!"

As she said these few words aloud she threw her knitting-work into her basket, extinguished her home-made tallow candle, then ran, as fast as the weight of her years would allow her, to the front room window, to see the sleighing party drive through the main-street of Silveryville. To enjoy this rare pleasure was the reason why she sat up so late, and why she progressed thus far in her reverie over the history of Merton Malver's life.

Before Mrs. Dorane's door there was a deep snow-drift; the first sleigh of the party was suddenly driven over a convenient stone in a way that overturned its occupants helter-skelter into the midst of the deep snow-drift. This purposely designed accident occasioned many peals of merriment among the giddy young men and women who were its unhurt victims; in this loudly demonstrative mirthfulness, they were heartily joined by their companions, who were occupants of the sleighs that overtook them before they had regained their seats.

Aunt Dorothy looked on in high glee, and enjoyed the amusement of viewing the merry "up-

set" almost as much as they did who were the actors in it.

She counted the sleighs as they passed her, one after another, until she counted twelve. She knew as well as any body, that twelve was the complete number of the whole party, for she had watched it on its departure from Silveryville. As soon as the last one passed she hastened to her downy pillow, where she soon rested her head in balmy sleep.

The last thoughts which passed through her mind, ere she became unconscious, were anxiously given to the many domestic duties that, with the dawn of the following day, would require her active attention.

Dorothy's parents had lived in very comfortable circumstances, as Pennsylvania farmers, but the rearing and educating a large family of children, the deaths of several grown children, then their own very protracted attacks of sickness, had greatly reduced their pecuniary means.

After the decease of the last parent, when the estate was divided into nine shares, all that Dorothy could call her own, consisted of the house in which she was born, the lot of ground on which it stood, and such articles of household furniture and garden stock as her brothers and

sisters saw proper to give her; a cow, a pig, and a flock of domestic fowls. She would have disdained living without the possession of these domestic animals.

She had all her life been accustomed to the care of them, and she could not comprehend how any person could live without them. Thus she had provided for her a permanent and comfortable home. But she was without the necessary income where-with-all to keep it comfortable.

What was she to do?

She did not hesitate long in finding an appropriate answer to this interesting question; but with true Pennsylvania energy, at once resolved to commence teaching school.

Her prospect of success in her new course of life was, at the time, very fair, because the former village school-mistress had lately married and retired from the occupation.

Did Aunt Dorothy think she was lowering her dignity as a rich man's daughter, and as the widow of an officer in the Navy of the United States? Did she fear the effect of her becoming a teacher would be to injure her in the estimation of her friends? Did she reflect that if she spent her time teaching she might lose caste in her social standing with her neighbors in society?

There is caste and there is society too, even in our village, although the world may not believe there are.

Such ideas never entered her head. Besides being school-teacher, she was the performer of all her own domestic labor. The morning after her late sitting up, waiting to witness the return of the sleighing party, she over-slept the usual hour of arising, and the consequence was that she had to hurry with inconvenient speed through the work required to be done before nine o'clock, at which hour she opened school in Winter. While she was giving the finishing touches to her household morning duties, two of her scholars came to her kitchen door, and asked permission to sharpen their slate pencils on the large, rough hearth-stone of the open fire-place.

Their request was readily granted by Mrs. Dorane; while they sharpened their pencils to slender points, and she silently continued her employment without seeming to notice or listen to them, they gossiped in a quiet undertone about the sleighing party, which their older sisters had attended.

"O, they had a merry time of it last night," said one, "how glad I will be when I am old enough to go to sleighing parties."

"So will I, too," answered the other, "did your sister tell you about the splendid supper they had in Winterville?

"No, not a word, she never thinks of such things. Did your sister Mary tell you about it?"

"O yes indeed, she kept us busy listening to her about it, all the time we were at the breakfast table this morning, for you see she does think of such things, and likes them too."

"Well then, please do tell me all she said about it."

"I am afraid I will not have time to do that before school opens, for you see Teacher is nearly done her butter working."

"No matter if she is, she has to scald and put away the churn and cream-pot, the pan and spoon too, before she will stop to open school."

"O, I guess she will leave them stand where they are until after school is out."

"Aunt Dolly, our Teacher, leave them stand! Did you ever see *her* leave anything stand one minute after she was done using it?"

"No, no, never! but tell me all you know about the sleighing-party supper last night."

"They had two long tables in the dining-room, on each table two large roasted turkeys, two geese, four deep dishes of stewed chickens, one

large dish of boiled ham, two of fried ham and eggs, two of fried sausage, and two of fried scrapple, two very large pound cakes, two sponge cakes, four plates of doughnuts, six of bread, six of hot buckwheat cakes, and four of waffles. Then between these, there were more smaller plates, of pies, custards, pickles and preserves, than she could find time to count."

"How many musicians had they in the room?"

"Four, and they played beautifully."

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, at that moment, merrily rang Mrs. Dorothy Dorane's little bell, at her desk in the school-room; the sound broke up the conversation of the two scholars, who were still in the kitchen, and warned them that the time had arrived to commence their daily tasks at their own desks, and in their classes.

The school-room, so full of lively interests to the gay and young, we will not enter, it is a place of mental drudgery to the majority of readers, and we will have little to do with its musty mysteries. We will not follow our friend, Mrs. Dorothy Dorane, through the various duties of the day among her pupils. Neither will we follow her as she prepares and enjoys her quiet evening meal; it will probably be shared by some gossiping friend and neighbor in whose conver-

sation we would not take an interest, because it will not be connected with the history of Merton Malvers and the funeral of Mr. Emgreen. But we will wait patiently until Mrs. Dorane is left alone in her quiet home. When with her knitting work in her hands, she has taken her seat for the evening beside her own blazing fire, she will mentally return to the scenes of former days in the residence of Mr. Emgreen, or she will solace the hours of her evening solitude by meditation on the past lives of her friends and neighbors. Whether at home or abroad in her evening hours, her needle or knitting work was her inseparable companion. She never spent one idle moment any where.

But with the history of her own life we will not now interfere. Having *en passant* described this much of her manner of living, we will now allow her full liberty to finish in her own words the plain and unvarnished history of the life of her relative, Merton Malvers, and his wife, without any further interruption or delay.

CHAPTER V.

MR. EMGREEN'S WILL.—A BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT.

By the time the partakers of the funeral supper had departed, the hour for the night's retirement to rest had arrived. Minnie's grief over the loss of her late father was deeply seated, and when the house was deserted by all their friends, the afflicted widow and her daughter passed together an hour of bitter weeping and mourning over their melancholy bereavement.

In their sorrow, Merton felt but little sympathy, he had never experienced much affection for the deceased, and did not grieve over his unexpected departure from the land of the living. Yet he said many words in order to console his wife and mother-in-law in their painful lamentations, and finally prevailed on them both to retire to rest. He also very soon placed his head upon his pillow, but not to sleep—schemes and plans relating to his future expenditure of the wealth which he expected to inherit, kept him wide awake. Minnie was the only child of her father, and therefore he expected she would of course, be his only heir. It was true Mr.

Emgreen had made a will, which was to be opened and read the next day. Yet Merton did not for one moment believe there could possibly be anything in it contrary to his wishes and welfare. So confident was he of being the undisputed possessor of at least two-thirds of Mr. Emgreen's estate, that he perplexed his brains a long time, about the question of which house, or lot, or shares of bank-stock he should first sell and convert into cash for his own immediate use. Worrying over this hard-to-be-decided matter, he passed several sleepless hours. The afternoon of the next day, his and my relative, Adam Guildhall, who was the only legal gentleman our village could at that time produce, who had written the will, and whose wife and wife's brother had witnessed it, when signed by Mr. Emgreen, assembled in the presence of Mrs. Emgreen, Merton Malvers and his wife Minnie, in one of the Emgreen parlors, for the purpose of opening and reading the last will and testament of the lately deceased Mr. Emgreen.

The contents of the will astonished Mr. and Mrs. Malvers, until they were speechless with astonishment and dismay. Then they were glad that their own relations, were the only wit-

nesses of the astounding contents of that ill-fated will.

They hoped that thus they might be spared the painful mortification of having its contents talked about by all the idle gossips of the county.

The meaning of the will, in plain, common-sense English, unbespattered by the tedious technicalities and formalities of legal and latin terms, in which the law directs and delights to ornament every document that falls into its possession, was simply this. That the late Mr. Emgreen did bequeath to his faithful and loving wife, the whole and entire estate, real and personal, of which he was the owner at the time of his decease. Merton's name was not once mentioned in the will, and to poor Minnie he bequeathed only, the acknowledgment that she was not his daughter, but the child—the oldest child—of Mrs. Tendem, a poor woman who lived in a distant county of Pennsylvania, and who was, when he last heard from her, the mother of a large family of children. Poor Merton, poor Minnie, what an afflicting discovery the reading of that will produced. Merton loved his fair young wife, as much as some men can love their wives; but of course it was natural he

should also have loved what he supposed was her wealth. To find so unexpectedly, that she was the offspring of a poor woman, the eldest sister of a large family of poor children, at once deprived of her long enjoyed riches, and endowed with the inheritance of a long retinue of needy, dependent relations. O the contemplation of the difference was agonizing to both the young man and his no less astonished wife! Mrs. Emgreen earnestly and immediately requested the lawyer, his wife and her brother, never to mention the contents of the will to any living creature, and they promised they would not. They soon afterwards took their departure from the house of the now doubly afflicted family. As soon as they were gone, Merton also left the dwelling, and walked, with hasty strides, up the back street of Silveryville, in rear of the gardens, until he reached the creek, he then entered his row-boat and crossed the stream, entered the thick woods of forest trees, and seating himself on a fallen tree-trunk, he poured out in great bitterness, the anguish which oppressed his heart.

When Minnie and the widow found themselves alone, they hung on each others necks, and wept unrestrainedly a long time; at last Mrs. Emgreen recovered her composure, and said:

"Dear Minnie, do not grieve so much over this painful news, I love you all the same as if you were in reality my own daughter, and I have had the care of you, ever since you first breathed. Do not then fret over this discovery of your own parentage. I regret exceedingly that Mr. Emgreen saw proper to make it known to you. I wanted you to live all your life, in the belief that you were really my own child."

"O mother, mother, my only real mother, you must be, I will never believe I can have any other; how cruelly unkind it was in him to make this circumstance known in such a way as this, so abruptly, so unexpectedly!"

"He did it, dear child, for what he thought would be conducive to your own best interest."

"I do not see how that can be."

"Do not, dear Minnie, judge him too harshly; he is in his grave, let his memory rest in peace; and be assured my own dear darling Minnie, that nothing but death shall make me cease to love you, and that as long as I have home and money, you shall share them with me. Come, come now, my own dearest, cheer up and forget that you ever were informed that I am not your own real mother."

"When, if ever, did I see any other mother?"

"Not since you were two years old. After that she sent a few times by letter to inquire after you, but it is now full twelve years since we have heard any news about her."

"Who was she? Will you not tell me, dear mother?"

"What would be the use? Let us forget her, as in all probability she has long ago forgotten us. Her present husband is not your father, he died before you were born. But, dear Minnie, let us now cease to speak on this subject, and let us try to forget it altogether."

Many words of this nature did Mrs. Emgreen pour into the willing ears of her adopted daughter, until she became calmly composed, and tried to fancy that what she had heard read was only an unpleasant dream. It was then agreed between them, that they would continue to live as they were then doing, without making any change in their domestic arrangements. Also, Mrs. Emgreen promised to pay Merton Malvers a regular, yearly salary for attending to the business of her estate.

In her own private thoughts she very much feared he would not perform his part as faithfully as she would wish him to, yet she resolved to try him a year at least. She did not impart

her fears to Minnie, because she did not wish to worry her with them.

Merton continued on his fallen seat, and still poured forth in words, "not loud, but deep," the disappointed anguish of his soul with an overflowing flood of sorrow. He was naturally proud and high-minded, but at the same time he was very selfish, and exceedingly fond of his own ease. The grief he could not feel for the death of his reputed father-in-law, flowed freely through his heart and crushed all its fondest hopes, over the deprivation of his share in his property. A more miserably disappointed man it would be hard to find in all the length and breadth of Silveryville. The hardest part of his suffering seemed to him to be its utter loneliness, for he felt he could not dare to share it even with his own wife, or with any other living creature.

It seemed to him as if she had conspired with others to entangle him into the meshes of an imprudent and disgraceful marriage, by not having made known to him her own real parentage.

Thus unreasonable he was. How could she communicate what she did not know? Then, again, if Merton would have been unbiased by his own selfish feelings, if he could have calmly viewed the facts of the case, as they really ex-

isted, he would have seen that if he had acted the part of a real, true man, and had not spent his own means in idleness and imprudence, Mr. Emgreen would never have disinherited Minnie.

He also should have remembered that no one but himself and wife was to blame for their marriage, as her friends were strongly opposed to it.

But when did man in a passion ever listen to the voice of reason?

He remained in the woods until long after night-fall. Then he turned his footsteps in a homeward direction, almost detesting the idea of entering a house in which he had received such a stunning blow to all his imaginary prosperity. He did not walk through the village by the back street as he had left it in the afternoon, but went along the front one. Unfortunately, he in it, had to pass the village hotel. The bar-room was open and well lighted; near the windows were seated some five or six of Merton's cheer-loving friends, one of whom called him to "Come in and take a drink."

As Merton had not been at the hotel since Mr. Emgreen's death, the sight of him once more was hailed as a joyful event, and his comrades received him with many warm expressions of

welcome. Treat after treat, drink after drink, followed his entrance among them.

One of the party jeered him on his woe-begone looks, and said,

"Unsleeve my over-coat, if I would look so solemncholy as you do for the loss of a dozen rich fathers-in-law; come, cheer up Merton Malvers, and take some wine or brandy, and let us see the color of your teeth once more."

Glass after glass followed this heartless speech, until the midnight hour found them still over their rum-glasses. At that time the landlord advised them to go home, as he said he dared not risk his reputation by keeping his house open any later.

The whole party were decidedly the worse for the liquor they had consumed, but Merton, who had partaken more freely than the others, was helplessly intoxicated; so much so, that he was incapable of finding his way home. After his companions had retired from the premises, the landlord and the bar tender led him there between them, entered his dwelling by the back entrance, and by Minnie's directions (who was waiting up for him), conducted him quietly to his bed.

Poor Minnie, her cup of sorrow now seemed, to her, to be filled to overflowing. Ah, how

well for her it was she did not know how much more it would be made to hold!

Merton remained in a state of insensibility until a late hour the next morning. When he recovered the use of his senses, the first thing he asked for was a glass of liquor, instead of which he received from the hands of his sorrowing young wife, a large cup of very strong coffee.

He remained in bed nearly all day. Towards evening, when he appeared to be entirely restored to a state of sobriety, his wife communicated to him the intentions of Mrs. Emgreen, respecting him, and the plan of living in future, without making any change in her home. She then affectionately exhorted him, for the sake of their lovely young children, to forsake the bottle and its fatal contents forever. That awful bottle—his deadly foe—which had at last reduced him to the state of miserable helplessness. He promised her, he would never again drink. But the promise was made in his own strength, and it was—ah! how feeble.

Minnie, too, appealed only to his feelings as a man and a father. She was most strangely indifferent to the sentiments of a Christian, and in all her ardent desires for her husband's safety, she forgot to cast her care upon her Creator, or

to seek on his behalf, in prayer and supplication, the aid of his Holy Spirit. How strange it is, that in this land of Bibles, and of unfettered religous instruction, there should be found one single heart unblessed by a daily—an hourly—yea, an ever abiding trust and confidence in the protection and guidance of the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Merton Malvers promised amendment in his habits. For some time he kept his word, and bid fair to become and remain a sober man.—Meanwhile some of Mrs. Emgreen's business transactions called him to a distant part of the county.

Minnie, fearing that while absent from home, he might be tempted to taste the contents of the alluring bottle, resolved to accompany him on his journey. While they were away Mrs. Emgreen begged me to remain with her on a visit.

One evening she surprised me by saying,

"Dear Dolly, did you ever hear anything said about our family secret?"

"No, never. What is it?"

"Poor Minnie," said Mrs. Emgreen, "was in great trouble about it at first, and I do not want her ever to be reminded of it. On that account I feel anxious to know whether or not it is talked

about by the neighbors; if it was I would remove to some other place. It is that she is not my own child. You remember, perhaps, that she was only three years old when we came here from Philadelphia. We there adopted her the very same day on which she was born. Her mother was a young widow, only fifteen years old, and very poor. She re-married and removed to B. county, when Minnie was about two years of age. She has several other children, and her name is Mrs. Tendem. I have never told these particulars to Minnie, but I will some day when she will be better able to hear them. She never knew anything about her real parentage until she heard Mr. Emgreen's will read. I suppose he thought he could not effectually disinherit her without betraying it. He would not have done it if she had not married Merton Malvers against his wishes and commands."

"While I live," continued the widow, "Minnie shall not suffer the want of a home, she is as dear to me as if she were my own child, and her babes, are they not the sweetest little creatures you ever saw?"

"Yes, they are beautiful, the very image of herself."

Merton returned safely, and remained sober

about six months. He was then induced to revisit the bar-room and fell a victim to the temptations there offered. Poor Minnie, how keen was the sorrow with which she saw him once more in a state of idiotic intoxication. Why will men plunge their nearest and dearest relations, into such whirlpools of anguish?

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC.

When Merton again recovered the use of his senses, he declared he was sorry for the trouble he had caused, and vowed never to be led astray again. Then during several months his conduct was irreproachable. Minnie's hopes were revived by his many fair promises, but once more they were extinguished by Merton's repeated falls into intoxication; again and again he fell and repented. Thus he vacillated during the lapse of several years.

Sometimes he would remain sober and attend to Mrs. Emgreen's business quite punctually during several months, then he would neglect it entirely for as many weeks, while he gave him-

self up to a disgraceful indulgence of drinking to an excess that kept him constantly inebriated.

Many were the sleepless nights, which his wife spent in weeping over his fatal love of liquor. But by this time, the natural consequence of his habits was manifesting itself by an increasing callousness of heart, and an unfeeling indifference to her sufferings.

About this period our village was visited by a gentleman from Germany, who was well educated, and spoke English very correctly, thereby proving that he had learned it in early life. His appearance was prepossessing, and he seemed to have money enough to support him comfortably.

He engaged board at the hotel, and remained there several months. He came into our midst an unknown stranger, and without an introduction. As usual, in all similar cases, we were cautious about receiving him into our society, for we Silveryvillites are naturally reserved, in our intercourse with strangers. After we know people, we are hospitable, almost to a fault, but in our conduct towards strangers, we are far from being affable.

But some how, there was soon an exception made to our general rule, in favor of this interesting young German gentleman, and he

was kindly as well as sociably treated by all the best families in our village. At this time Minnie's oldest son was a beautiful, bright boy, four years of age, named Rudy. One day we were all invited to a Sunday school picnic. Minnie did not join the party. She was not happy anywhere, and pleaded as her excuse for not attending it, that her babe was too young, either to be taken there, or left at home without her.

Mrs. Emgreen anxiously urged her to go, for the sake of little Rudy; who she knew would enjoy it very much.

But Minnie would not go, and Mrs. Emgreen in her wish to gratify the child, resolved she would take him; although it was contrary to her custom, to enter any large company since the death of her husband.

On the day of the picnic, the Sunday school children and their teachers, met in their school-room; when they were all assembled, they entered several large coaches, and rode up the thickly shaded street of the village, crossed the old stone bridge, and entered the deep, green woods, where their parents and their friends awaited their arrival. As they rode, they were escorted by a banner and band of music. Rudy

was delighted, and when his kind grandmother saw how much he enjoyed it, she rejoiced at having taken him there.

While the children were eating their dinner, they were waited upon by their teachers and parents. Mrs. Emgreen took her grandson, and three other children near him, under her own especial care, and saw all their wants properly supplied. This occupation she seemed to enjoy very much, and I was pleased to see her wear once more, on her dear, familiar face, the smiles of happiness which had not rested there since the decease of Mr. Emgreen.

At first I was so much engaged in watching the children, and her kind attentions to them, that I did not notice a tall, dark figure, ever and anon, gliding near her. This same tall, dark figure, did at last draw my eyes towards it, and they discovered, that it would now and then, bow its stately head to the ear of the happy-looking widow, and appear to whisper words of commendation, of encouragement or approbation, for the whispered words, whatever they might be, were very graciously received, and responded to with smiles and glances, that made me stare with amazement.

Who is he? Where did he come from? were

the questions which I put to my nearest neighbor, as soon as the spell of gazing at him could be sufficiently broken, to allow me the liberty of using my speech.

"He is," was the answer, "Mr. Gathschlachengen, he came from Germany, he says, but to me he appears more like a Parisian than a German."

"Not, ever to my knowledge, having seen a Parisian I do not know whether your remark is just or not, but I do know, he is very different from all the Germans I ever saw, and that he is a magnificent man."

When the children were done eating, they were again dismissed to their sports and pastimes among the rocks and trees. The table was then re-set, and re-furnished with fresh supplies of edibles, from the provision boxes and baskets, which seemed in their abundance to be inexhaustible. This ceremony completed, we all sat down and enjoyed the good things of the repast, almost as much as our juvenile companions had done. During the meal, and all the time we remained in the woods, Mr. Gathschlachengen continued his attentions either to Mrs. Emgreen, or her little boy Rudy. He gazed on them both, with expressions of intense interest and admiration, portrayed on the features of his

uncommonly handsome face. He seemed to have neither word nor thought for any other person in the whole assembly.

Now our friend Mrs. Emgreen, was at least fifty years of age, and although she was remarkably pleasant looking to her old friends, who knew her many good qualities of mind and disposition, she was not, by any means, to a stranger, attractive or prepossessing in her manners or appearance.

What then could that beautiful young foreigner see in her to induce him to neglect the many bright eyes, and blooming charms of a multitude of fair damsels by whom he was surrounded?

Why did he shun their company, and seek only that of the antiquated widow?

The affair was, to many of us, an unfathomable mystery.

It was true, that Rudy was a very lovely child, and it was evident that the fascinating young German did bestow quite as much attention on the boy, as he did on his grandma.

When the day was near its close, the children were packed in the coaches, and sent riding to their homes. When the hour arrived for the final breaking up of the party, Mr. Gathschlachengen walked from the woods with Mrs. Em-

green hanging on his arm, while he led Rudy by the hand. Arrived at the house of Mrs. Emgreen, she invited him to walk in and take tea with her. Both invitations were gracefully accepted. I and another neighbor followed, we had promised to spend the evening with Mrs. Emgreen. Minnie was watching for our arrival, at the parlor window, and was much surprised to see us accompanied by the tall, dark stranger.

But he had scarcely been introduced to her, when she seemed to be quite reconciled to his presence. He fixed a long, steady gaze upon Minnie's face, and then seemed to be more captivated than ever. He evidently admired the daughter still more than he had done the mother. He gazed, and gazed, on the sad face of poor Minnie, with looks that were long and lingering, yet so tender, and so sad, in their expression, that they could not offend.

When supper was over, we all sat around the parlor table, talking over the interesting events of the past day, and lamenting to Minnie that she had not been with us to enjoy them. During a sudden pause in the conversation, Mr. Gathschlachengen pulled from inside his coat, a black ribbon, to which was attached a small miniature, richly set in gold and diamonds. This

miniature he looked at very steadily, and then handed it to Mrs. Emgreen, and asked her if she did not think it resembled her daughter.

"O," said she, "it is the most perfect likeness I ever saw, as she was three or four years ago! Where did you get it?"

"I got it in Germany."

"Is it your Sister's miniature?" I ventured to ask him.

"Not my Sister's, but of one who was as dear as a sister. Fate separated us, and she is now sleeping with the dead."

Then with one more long look at the beautiful miniature, he returned it to its hiding place under his coat. His sadness was very touching, and we all sympathized with him.

This little affair explained the mystery of his attachment to Rudy and his mother, as they bore a strong resemblance to each other; but it did not solve the mystery of the attraction, which caused him to pay so much attention to Mrs. Emgreen.

When we bade good-night to Minnie and her mother, Mr. Gathschlachengen escorted us to the doors of our respective houses.

CHAPTER VII.

OUR FIRST NEWSPAPER.

I no longer wondered at the facility with which this unintroduced stranger had worked himself into the good will and kind attentions of our village people; for there were charms in his manners and conversation, that were irresistibly fascinating.

There was an expression of combined sweetness and sorrow, beaming from his deep blue eyes, which seemed to enter the heart of every beholder.

What a bright prize he was for our remaining single village belles! Would any one of them win him?

The next day at noon I was much surprised by a call from Mr. Guildhall; a call from him at that time of day was unprecedented; my surprise was much increased at seeing he was accompanied by Mr. Gathschlachengen; they lost no time in ceremonious conversation, but at once still more excited my amazement, by communicating the object of their visit.

That object was the request that we would

subscribe for a weekly paper, which they intended to publish very soon in Silveryville! Our first Silveryville Newspaper!

How my heart bounded with joy at the idea of having printed within the limits of our own little village, the pages of a newspaper! It made me feel as if we had suddenly become an important and highly elevated community. Hitherto we had been dependent upon other places, for all the printed news we ever saw, but now behold, we were to have them in type of our own setting, free from the obligation to other people for our weekly knowledge of occurrent events. We most willingly subscribed our two dollars, and paid them in advance for one year.

When the welcome paper was thrown into our door, I seized it most joyfully, and read its contents very eagerly. It was printed on a sheet of coarse, almost brown paper, such paper as now would be considered scarcely good enough for wrapping paper; but in that by-gone, good old year, it was thought fine enough for printing paper, and was not said to be too coarse, too common or dark, by any one of its subscribers; on the contrary, the Silveryvillites were all as much pleased with it, as if it had been printed on satin, in letters of gold.

The paper measured, when entirely opened, twenty inches in length and seventeen in breadth.

It was very interesting to read in the advertisements, notices, the deaths, marriages, the accidents and descriptions of public meetings, the familiar names of our near neighbors, intimate friends, and of our relatives!

The editorial was short, but decidedly to the point of advocating, in strong terms, the honor and prosperity of our well beloved village.

When I had read through the entire paper—every line and every word of it—I felt more than ever interested in the present welfare and past history, of its handsome young Editor, Mr. Gathschlachengen.

Very soon I discovered that an intimacy had been formed between him and my cousin, Mr. Adam Guildhall, of which I was very glad, as it gave me an opportunity of asking questions about him.

So anxious was I to know more of his past history, that one afternoon, with my knitting basket on my arm, I started off, and did not arrest my progress until I had walked up the street, crossed the old stone bridge, and arrived at the beautiful residence of my cousin,

Mrs. Ann Guildhall. I found her sitting alone at a window, which opened on her flower garden, and to a view beyond it of the native forest.

As soon as I could do so, without appearing abrupt, or suspiciously anxious on the subject, I made of her several inquiries about the former life of Mr. Gathschlachengen.

She did not hesitate to afford me all the information she possessed respecting his past history.

From the account thus willingly furnished me, I gleaned the events of the following narrative.

He was the second son of a rich nobleman in Germany. He had living a father, one brother, two sisters, but no mother.

From his mother he inherited the annual income of five hundred dollars. His father was so rich that when his steward made the semi-annual deposits of his rents, in the bank for safe keeping, they were more in weight than could be carried by hand, and had to be conveyed there in a wheeled vehicle. When Mr. Gathschlachengen was about eighteen years of age, he formed an acquaintance with a plebeian family.

This family had a daughter of rare and captivating beauty. She finally had so much influence over him, that he resolved to marry her, as

soon as he should arrive at the age of twenty-one years. He knew his father would not approve of such an unequal matrimonial engagement. He therefore tried to keep his intentions from his knowledge. But in spite of all his efforts to keep them hidden, they were betrayed to him, a few months before he became of age. As soon as the astounding news was fully comprehended, and believed by the father, he without delay, through the influence of large sums of money, prevailed upon the parents of the captivating young Winifrede, to remove her to some distant land, under such arrangements, and secret movements, that her lover should never be able to find her. Soon after her departure from Germany, Mr. Gathschlachengen, without any reason, conceived the idea that she had been transported to North America. So fully was his mind possessed with this fancy, that he determined to go there and endeavor to find her. The day after he completed his twenty-first year, he commenced his preparations for his searching voyage.

In vain his father, brother and sisters, tried to persuade him from making such an unnecessary journey; he was deaf to all their reasoning, and insisted upon taking his leave of them,

and turning his face towards the Western Hemisphere.

When at last his father found he was unalterably resolved to perform the long journey, he became very angry, and at once made a will, in which he disinherited his second son, and vowed never to give him one dollar.

Mr. Gathschlachengen thinking more of his lost love than of his future fortune, heeded not even his father's wrath, and set sail for the United States.

About a month after his arrival in this country, one of his sisters wrote him a letter, containing lines similar to the following:

MY DEAR BROTHER:

I have sorrowful tidings to communicate, which I know will fill your heart with grief, and it pains me exceedingly, dear Alfred, to be obliged to trouble you, with these melancholy lines. But there is no help for it; my father has commanded me to write them, and I dare not disobey him. The object of this letter is to inform you that Winifrede is not in Germany, nor in America, neither is she any where on the face of the earth, but in her quiet, early grave under it. She died four weeks ago, of influenza, at Gibraltar.

Now that you know, dearest brother, you can

never see her again in this world, will you not, our own dear Alfred, return to your native home, which seems very sad to us all, because you are away from us?

Father says if you will come home, he will forgive and forget all your past disobedience; and that he will destroy his will, and make another largely in your favor, the very day of your arrival.

Brother and sister send you their most affectionate expressions of fraternal love, and we all unite in most lovingly urging you to return home, as soon as possible, and restore to us all our former domestic happiness.

Your loving Sister,

&c., &c., &c.

Alfred Gathschlachengen's heart was torn with keenest anguish when he read this sad letter from his favorite sister.

He answered it with many expressions of affection toward her, her sister and her brother.

But not one word of greeting, or of message, did he ever send to his father. He blamed him for the death of Winifrede, and in his anger, he vowed never to return to Germany, where the scenes and people would be constantly reminding him of his lost, and well-beloved, fair young Winifrede. He never ceased to wear mourning.

After that he spent his time in wandering about through different cities and towns. His five hundred dollars a year, kept him from absolute want, but it did not by any means suffice to supply him with the luxuries of life, to which he had always been accustomed.

In order to increase his pecuniary income, to be able to indulge more freely in the use of those luxuries, he would sometimes engage in teaching the French and German languages, at others he would per chance, pick up a few hard earned dollars, by writing for the press. In his roving, from place to place, he chanced to visit our village. He had now been in America about two years, and began to feel that he would like to settle down in a home of his own, if he could be so fortunate as to become the master of one. Our beautiful little town pleased him very much. Its double rows of quivering, silvery aspen trees that shade the side walks of its quiet, grassy streets, the glittering of large portions of isinglass, mixed with the stones used in building its houses, and with which the streets are also partially covered, rendered it a very beautiful, bright place, and fully entitled it to the name of Silvery.

Its beautiful groves of weeping willows, its

wooded walks, its deep clear creek, the purling brook that flows into it, so well calculated to afford pleasure to boat rowers, and to trout-anglers, were all of them powerful objects of attraction to Mr. Gathschlachengen, and as soon as he became aware of the existence of all these rarely combined advantages, he resolved to cast in his lot, with the good people of our delightful village.

He soon won his way into the good graces of Mr. Guildhall, by the elegance of his manners and conversation. It was through his advice and influence, that he formed the project of starting a weekly paper in our midst. He was totally ignorant of the art of printing, but Mr. Guildhall conquered that difficulty, by hiring a journeyman printer, from Winterville, to manage and conduct the mechanical part of the enterprise. Of course to get it successfully afloat required more capital than Mr. Gathschlachengen could command, or collect from his subscribers, but Mr. Guildhall was a man of means, and wonderfully accommodating in making loans of money to him.

"How is all this to end? said I to cousin Ann Guildhall.

"O, he will pay them all one of these days, Mr. Guildhall thinks."

"But how can he, Cousin Ann? the paper will never pay well enough to enable him to extricate himself from debt."

"Mr. Guildhall says he will marry money and then pay all he owes."

Marry money, thought I to myself, who will he marry? then in my own mind I made a review of all the marriageable heiresses, and heiresses apparent, not only in Silveryville, but likewise, in a circuit several miles around it, and I could not find one among them all, who was not already engaged to be married to somebody else. There were many young ladies in the neighborhood, who no doubt would have been highly pleased with his particular attentions, but among them there was not one who had received, or ever expected to inherit a fortune. Of whom then could my cousin be thinking, for it was evident that she *was* thinking of some fair, fortunate lady, who might in future, become Mrs. Gathschlachengen. I puzzled myself some minutes, trying to solve the mystery, and then came to the conclusion, that he must be engaged to some lady of wealth, of some other town, or place, who was unknown to me. Then I said to Cousin Ann,

"Marry money, to whom is he to be married?"

"I must not tell."

"Do you know the lady's name?"

"O yes, Cousin Dolly, I know it very well and so do you too."

"Do tell me who she is."

"It is not yet decided with certainty, but Mr. Guildhall believes, that after a while, he will marry one who has plenty of cash at her command."

"One whom we both know?

"Yes and have known many years."

"Then he must be intending to try to induce some one of our rich girls to break a solemn engagement! if he has no better principle than that, he had better never have come to Silveryville."

"No engagement will be broken, the lady in question is at perfect liberty, and entirely free."

"Who is she, Cousin Ann?"

"Wait until the affair is a little more advanced, and then I will tell you all about it."

"O tell me now, please do!"

"No, not yet, wait a little longer. If it should be too freely talked about through the village, it might be all frustrated, and then Mr. Guildhall would not recover the money he has advanced through Mr. Gathschlachengen, for the

public good. So now let the matter rest in silence. I dare say you will know all about it before any body else."

Then as if to change the subject, she suddenly said,

"Do you know that Mr. Gathschlachengen has taken boarding at Mrs. Emgreen's?"

"No, it cannot be possible!"

"But it *is* possible, and actual too, for he has been boarding there these two weeks."

"Why, Cousin Ann, how you astonish me! What has induced him to board there?"

"The comforts of a private home, and economy combined I presume, as she boards him for much less than he paid at the hotel."

"But how strange in Mrs. Emgreen, to bother herself with a boarder! She is very foolish?"

"*So Mr. Guildhall thinks,*" said Cousin Ann quite emphatically.

Then after another pause she said,

"Do you know that Minnie Malvers' children are sick with the measles?"

"No I do not, are they?"

"Yes, cousin Dolly what ails you? You seem to be getting quite behind the age, and ignorant of all that is going on among your neighbors, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing. But it is very strange I had not heard of the sickness of Minnie's children, are they very ill?"

"Not yet, they were taken sick day before yesterday. It appears that Rudy is the most severely attacked."

"I am sorry," said I, "of this new affliction to poor Minnie, there seems to be no end to her troubles; Merton I believe is not doing any better?

"No, he does worse and worse; it is a pity there is not some person there to take a manly and firm charge of their domestic affairs, who might exercise some authority over Merton's conduct and prevent his spreeing as much as he does."

"If the influence of a good, loving wife, an indulgent, rich mother-in-law, and such beautiful children as he has, cannot prevent it, what else can be expected to have that effect?"

"Perhaps the authority of a father-in-law might."

"Why then did it not while Mr. Emgreen lived?"

"I think it did, for you know he did much better then, than he does now."

"So he did, but his conduct was not what it ought to have been, and such habits as his, are progressive, they tend naturally downwards, to

ruin, where they must end, unless they are arrested by the power of divine grace, and that grace I much fear, is not sought by either Minnie or her mother."

"Nor by Merton."

"Of course not by him, how could it be, while his senses are almost constantly stupified by the fumes of suicidal alcohol?"

"That is true," said cousin Ann, "it is a pity that Mr. Emgreen was removed from his family."

"And a greater pity still, that Minnie dared to take her destiny in her own hands, by marrying Merton contrary to his commands. It often happens that when the young think they are wiser than their elders, a lifetime of misery and suffering is the inevitable forfeit. Poor Minnie, it is well for her that her mother remains."

"Do you not notice, cousin Dolly, that they have both become very remiss in their religious duties, since the death of Mr. Emgreen?"

This was to me a painful subject, and I could not bear to discuss it, I therefore cut it short by preparing to return to my own home.

By this time the evening was well advanced, the night dews were falling heavily, the moon was rising with full orbed, mellow splendor

above the tops of the aspen trees, and willow groves of Silveryville, the crickets sang merrily among the adjoining grass-plots and fall flower-beds. I rolled up my knitting, which all this time had been steadily growing in length, in proportion to the lessening of my yarn ball; I deposited it safely in my knitting basket, then bidding Cousin Ann good night, I walked through the mellow moon-light to my own peaceful home, where I spent another hour in knitting, listening to the ticking of the dark, old clock in the corner, and meditating painfully, over all that Cousin Ann had told me, before I retired to rest for the night.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CHANGE.

The next evening, as soon as our supper was over, I went to Mrs. Emgreen's, to inquire after Minnie's sick children. To my great surprise, I found Mr. Gathschlachengen intimately domesticated in the establishment, and occupying, in the sick chamber, the place that should have been filled by Merton Malvers only. It appeared

he had the sole charge of nursing Rudy. I felt that since the father was absent, and need of aid existed, I should have been called upon to furnish it, instead of that intrusive stranger.

I soon left them, and did not repeat my visit until I heard that Rudy was not expected to live; I then hastened to his side, my affection for the dear child induced me to endure meeting Mr. Gathschlachengen, and to witness the distress of poor Minnie. When I entered the sick room I was greatly relieved at seeing Merton in his "sober senses," and in deep sorrow, at the head of Rudy's bed gazing sadly upon the distorted features of his suffering child. I remained there all night, and through its wearisome hours of dread and anxiety, Merton did not leave the room.

Mr. Gathschlachengen was assiduously attentive to the invalid, and equally so to his afflicted parents. He remained in the sick room until mid-night, and then retired to his own. At three o'clock in the morning, Rudy's worst symptoms began to abate their violence, and by sunrise, he seemed to be slightly improving.

When the doctor called at nine o'clock, he said he thought the crisis was over, and that we might hope for the dear child's restoration to

health. He finally, after lingering several weeks, recovered so far as to be able to leave his bed. But he was incurably deaf, and so feeble and delicate, that he never again seemed like the same child.

Soon as he was relieved from the immediate danger of dying, Merton returned to his intemperate habits. By this time he was so habitually negligent of all his duties, parental and domestic, that Mrs. Emgreen could not trust him with the care of her business.

Gradually Mr. Gathschlachengen was working his way, into having the control of all her pecuniary arrangements.

About this time, death removed Merton's uncle, Mr. Maysin; his widow lived on a large farm in a distant part of Pennsylvania.

The farm was located in a secluded neighborhood, far removed from any tavern or hotel. Mrs. Maysin had heard of her nephew's evil habits, and desiring, if possible, to arrest them in time to save him from destruction, she conceived the idea that if he was living with her, and had the care of her farm—where there was no necessity for his engaging in severe manual labor—he might still become a reformed and useful man.

As he had been reared on a large farm, he was

experimentally well qualified to take charge of one. When her letter, in which she made known this project to Minnie, was read, she was much pleased with it, and immediately returned another, in which she warmly expressed many thanks for the interest manifested in the welfare of her deluded husband.

At the end of two weeks, Merton, Minnie and their three young children moved from Silveryville, to the home of Mrs. Maysin, on Island Farm.

About a month after their departure, the readers of our own newspaper, were much surprised when they saw in it, the following announcement:

"Married last evening, at the residence of the bride, by the Rev. Mr. Schwartzen, Mr. Alfred Gathschlachengen, Editor of this paper, to Mrs. Minnie Emgreen."

This marriage would have been laughably ridiculous, if it had not been for the misfortunes, which any one could see must follow in its train.

The folly of it was too painful for ridicule. The marriage ceremony was scarcely concluded before Mr. Adam Guildhall demanded the payment of the notes, which he held against the new husband. These notes had in some mysterious way, grown in amount, from a few hundred dol-

lars, to the enormous sum of nearly two thousand. Mr. Gathschlachengen declared he could not understand how it could be so much larger than he thought it was.

"That is your signature, is it not?" said the man of law, with an angry gesture, as he pointed to the name of the amazed editor on one of the notes.

"Yes, yes, that is my signature."

"Then, sir, you see the only mistake about it, is in the weakness of your own memory, which has forced you to forget the amount of your notes."

Mr. Gathschlachengen could not believe that his memory was so feeble. But it was in reality greatly at fault, for it entirely failed to remind him how frequently he had retired with Mr. Guildhall into his private office, and how often they two, unintruded on by other company, had therein spent hours after hours engaged only in friendly conversation, while they sipped luxuriously from dainty glasses, noyau cordial, champagne wine, and other expensive foreign liquors which were such a treat to his epicurean palate, as they forcibly reminded him of his father's well supplied tables. It failed to inform him how many times he loved to linger in that private

office, thus occupied, until his senses were strangely overpowered by these costly liquid delights, and that under their influence he often had been scarcely able to find his way to bed. It failed also to remind him, that at the time of signing the notes, those same famous liquors were always strongest in their effects, and that at such time, they were most bountifully urged on his acceptance by their artful and designing owner.

Poor Mr. Gathschlachengen! his memory was most sadly deficient in its duty to his welfare. Yet there were the notes against him, and he had to invest in their payment, a large portion of his newly acquired wealth.

He soon afterwards sold out his interest in the publication of the Silveryville newspaper; and betokened in his conduct, that he intended to live at his ease during the remainder of his life.

About two weeks after his marriage, I received the following letters from Minnie Malvers:

Island Farm.

MY DEAR DOLLY:

I wish you could see how comfortably we are getting along here, on this beautiful farm.

Aunt Maysin is exceedingly kind to us. Rudy

is still drooping, and I am afraid will never be better. The other children are very well.

Our coming here has been a blessed change for poor Merton. He already seems like another man, he is very attentive to Aunt's affairs, and affords her perfect satisfaction. She conducts her farm on strictly temperance principles, and will not allow any intoxicating liquor to be used on it as a beverage.

The situation of the house is delightful, it stands within sight of the Susquehanna River, and within a stone's throw of its western bank. The bright, broad stream forms a sudden bend around a part of the farm, and makes it look very much like an island. The house stands in a beautiful broad valley. This valley lies under the richest and most fertile cultivation; the soil is rich and yields abundantly. There are two large orchards on the farm, besides quite a large number of fruit trees of various kinds nearer the house.

There are two large barns in the vicinity of the house, each one is much more extensive in size than the dwelling. They are almost as well finished as the house, as they are painted and glazed and ornamented with wood-work devices, until they are quite adorning to the beautiful

scene by which they are surrounded. Besides these two large barns, there are other out-buildings, more in number than I have yet had time to count. But among them, in my estimation, as number one, is the spring house embowered in a cluster of weeping willow trees. The weeping willows! how I love them! they so forcibly remind me of dear old Silveryville, and its gay, green groves of weeping willows! These around Aunt's spring house, are the only ones I have seen in the neighborhood.

The Pennsylvania Spring house! was there ever in the "wide, wide world," a sweeter, cleaner or colder place than a Pennsylvania Spring house? Aunt's is built over a never failing spring of pure, clear, cold water. It is a small stone building, not far from the dwelling house; it has a shed-like roof of white pine boards painted red out-side and white within. The walls are from seven to eight feet high, and are very thick. In the centre there is a solid stone floor, about five feet square; around this stone floor the water flows to the depth of six or seven inches. In this shallow water, the pans of milk, cream and butter are kept standing. There are shelves for holding pies, bread, &c.

Aunt is very particular about her dairy, and

makes butter of the very best quality. The view around us is very extensive and enchantingly beautiful.

We have not many very near neighbors, but the few we have are kind and friendly.

I hope Mr. Gathschlachengen will be kind to mother, but it must be confessed he is much too young to make her a suitable husband.

Yours, &c., &c.

CHAPTER IX.

A RAG CARPET PARTY.

Island Farm.

MY DEAR DOLLY:

Although this is a busy month on the farm, we find sometime for social enjoyments.

The other day, one of our neighbors who lives about five miles beyond our place, invited all the gentry in the vicinity to a rag carpet party. When the invitations were given, they were received on all sides by a goodwilled and exceedingly popular response.

On the day appointed for the party, we had an early dinner. At half past twelve o'clock, we started for the house of feasting. Aunt May-

sin wished to be there early, she said, to be able to give a good long afternoon's help at the work among the carpet rags. We arrived there at half-past one o'clock. Pennsylvania farm-horses, you know, choose their own gait, and are not allowed to be hurried out of it, especially when driven by feminine hands, as the majority of them are, on going to these social gatherings.

When we entered the house, we found, early as we were, four other neighbors already there, and hard at work.

In the middle of the reception room—the best parlor—were placed two very large willow baskets, heaped up full of cut carpet rags.

We immediately went to work, sewing at them as fast as we could, and rolled them into balls that weighed, each one, as nearly as we could guess, a half a pound.

Soon after our arrival, the invited guests came in very rapidly, until about half-past two o'clock. At that hour, there were about forty well dressed, smiling and happy-looking ladies present. They were all busily plying their needles with telegraphic speed, and many of them were using their tongues quite as nimbly as they were their sewing implements. But some few of the party were as silent as mum-

mies, and as shy as rabbits. They were undoubtedly very reserved in their nature, or unaccustomed to meet so many persons as were then present.

The majority were young people. Besides our Aunt, there were only two other middle aged matrons present. We all sewed very industriously. It was an amusing—an animated scene to view the drawing in and out of so many needles at once. The twisting and twirling—the winding and twining of so many gaily colored rags, as they were busily wrapped into balls by jewel-decked fingers, formed a many-tinted and kaleidoscopic prospect.

By five o'clock, the heaps of cut rags were all converted into smoothly wound, neatly round balls, and were gathered together from various parts of the large room, by the most active of the visitors, they were then safely deposited in the two large willow baskets. The baskets were then put one on top of the other in the centre of the room where they were left, as a monument of approval in memory of our industry. Very soon afterwards, we were invited, out to supper. The evening meal was handsomely spread on a long, broad table in the centre of an immense dining-room. The table was filled with

a superabundance of all the good things of the season, among which were conspicuous, the quickly emptied plates of *fresh* buckwheat cakes. These cakes are as highly prized here, as in any other part of our Keystone State. The supper was of the very best of everything, deliciously prepared and duly enjoyed. But it was in general so much like party suppers in Silveryville, that I need not describe it. The only fault that can be found with them is, their superabundance and variety of luxuries.

On our return to the parlor, we found the monumental baskets of rag balls had become invisible, threads, needle-books, scraps and litters had all been removed. The room had been swept, and set in order, as if freshly prepared for the arrival of company. Clear white wax and sperm candles were placed upon the tables and mantles, and altogether the place looked very different from the factory-looking affair, it almost seemed to be during the few last hours.

Early in the evening the invited gentlemen of the neighborhood began to arrive, and by seven o'clock, there were quite as many of them in the room as there were of ladies.

Then commenced the games and sports of the evening.

But, dear Dolly, I am so tired now of writing, that I cannot at present tell you any more about this gay and lively rag carpet party. Merton came in the evening, and was the life and light of the whole room. He was in excellent spirits, and in his sober senses too, for there was nothing there to tempt him out of them. Lemonade, sweet cider and pure cold water were the only beverages, offered to the guests, after the tea and coffee of the supper.

This was decidedly the happiest evening I have experienced in a long, long time.

Rudy is getting better, and sometimes I fancy that his hearing is improving.

Write to me very soon, and tell me all you can about mother and her interesting young husband.

Yours, &c., &c.,

Minnie M.

CHAPTER X.

APPLE BUTTER BOILING.

Island Farm.

MY DEAR DOLLY:

Rudy is still improving, and Merton is all my heart can wish him to be. Aunt is still very kind to us, and she seems very well satisfied with Merton's mode of conducting her farm.

My other children are well, and growing finely. Therefore I ought to be very happy. But I am not. Aunt's only son, you know, is traveling in Europe, and will be absent from home about a year longer. When he returns, he will probably wish to take the farm, and Aunt's other affairs, into his own hands, in which case I shall feel that our presence will be unrequired in this place—and then where are we to go?

This painful question, always unanswered, keeps me in a state of perpetual anxiety whenever I think of it. Fortunately I am kept so busily employed, and so pleasantly occupied, that I have not much time to indulge my fancy

with forebodings, about the uncertainty of our future destiny.

The other night, Aunt Maysin had an apple-butter boiling entertainment, this being an event almost unknown in Silveryville, perhaps you may be interested in reading a description of it.

Two days before the one appointed for the boiling of the apple-butter, several men were engaged in grinding apples, in a large mill, for the purpose of making cider. They made several large barrels full, some of sweet, some of sour apples, and some of both kinds mixed together.

On the afternoon of the day of the apple-butter boiling, all hands about the house and farm were kept at work, very hurriedly, at paring, quartering and coring apples. At about seven o'clock, P.M., they hung up two large copper kettles, by iron chains, hanging on two large hickory poles, placed very high up the chimney, and supported there by two thick iron bars that were strongly secured in the masonry of the large stone chimney. They filled these large kettles with fresh, sweet cider, then made a roaring wood fire under them.

Meanwhile the apple paring and cutting were continued very hurriedly. When the cider began to boil, it was carefully skimmed until it was boiled perfectly clear.

Aunt then measured the cut apples to see if she had a sufficient number prepared, finding she had, they were all washed very nicely, then mashed (but not ground) in a patent apple-press, then poured into one of the kettles of boiling cider. As soon as they were all in, the process of stirring commenced, which it is necessary to continue incessantly until the apple-butter is done. It generally requires about twelve hours of hard and constant stirring.

The stirrer used for the purpose, is composed of a strong wooden handle, eight or ten feet long, firmly fixed in a dasher, eighteen or twenty inches long and four or five broad, and about one and a half thick. There are eight, ten or twelve large auger holes bored in the lower part of the dasher.

By eight o'clock in the evening, the invited apple-butter stirrers began to assemble, they were the youth of both sexes of the neighborhood. Some of them came several miles, on horseback or in carriages, to enjoy the sports of this merry apple-butter boiling.

Then the stirring went on most vigorously, and the piles of wood that were consumed under those two kettles would have sufficed, I believe, to build a moderate sized dwelling house. I

noticed that whenever the stirrer was taken by a gentleman, from the hands of a lady, he was privileged to snatch a kiss from her face at the same time—if he could. The many unsuccessful attempts which were made to secure that pleasure, caused a great amount of merriment. The stirring, laughing and chatting continued, without interruption, until ten o'clock, at that time, cakes, apples, chestnuts, lemonade and sweet cider were handed round to the company. At twelve o'clock one-half the party sat down to a sumptuous supper table, at which the aromatic steams of boiling hot tea and coffee, were added to the many other good things which graced the mid-night meal.

When they were done eating, they returned to the operation of stirring, and the other half of the party repaired to the dining-room, to feast on the delicacies that were spread out before them. At about three o'clock in the morning, the invited guests took their departure to their own homes. Then the labor of stirring was left to the members of our own family.

As the cider boiled away in the kettle that contained the apples, it was filled from the other with boiling cider. At about four o'clock, Aunt filled some large stone jugs with the clear, boil-

ing cider, which she said was to be used in making her mince pies next Christmas. At about seven o'clock the apple-butter was pronounced done, and then stowed away in earthen jars. This, you know, is a constant relish on the farmers' tables in Pennsylvania, and is invariably found on them three times daily. I was always fond of it, but I will esteem it more than ever now that I know how much labor and trouble it requires to make it.

Yours affectionately,

MINNIE MALVERS.

This was the last letter I ever received from Minnie. Soon after she wrote it, her son Rudy was taken sick. After lingering several weeks, he breathed his last, and his infantile spirit was released from its suffering house of mortal clay.

Minnie grieved over his death so sadly, that she could not afterwards write to me from the Island Farm.

The scenes, sights and sounds of the farm reminded her so vividly of her lost love, that she was weary of them. Yet judging that to remain there was the only plan of safety for her husband, she bore her sufferings silently, and fell

into a dull state of melancholy, which greatly distressed good Mrs. Maysin.

All this time things went on as usual at Silveryville. Mrs. Gathschlachengen was as loud as ever, in praising her darling young husband. There was no fault about him, visible to her love-blinded eyes. Through the day he sat about the house, quietly reading, or spent his time in attending to the business of his estate, his it was according to law, and his he failed not to call and consider it, in every sense of the word. The term "ours," respecting it, was never uttered by Mr. Gathschlachengen.

He sometimes received very affectionate letters, and very handsome presents from his sisters, but never a line, or a letter, or a word of message passed between him and his father. The presents sent by his sisters, consisted generally of valuable jewelry, more suitable for the use of ladies than gentlemen; and they were invariably sent off to Minnie as presents from him.

I often thought they ought to have been given to his wife, instead of her daughter. His evenings were always passed with Mr. Amos Guildhall, in his private office, and there he usually remained until long after midnight.

About eight months after the death of little

Rudy Malvers, Mr. Gathschlachengen's physical health began to fail, he grew very pale, sallow and thin.

Soon after, he lost both his cheerfulness and his appetite. His devoted old wife became much alarmed by these sad changes in his appearance, and wished at once to call in medical advice, but he would not consent to her doing so; he said he was not sick, and would not have the attention of a physician.

Mrs. Gathschlachengen then, unknown to her husband, called on Dr. Green, our best physician, and told him of her fears on his account. By questioning her very closely, the doctor obtained from the anxious wife, a correct description of his way of living, and in answer he said to her,

"O, don't worry yourself about him, I do not think there is much the matter with him; but you must urge upon him the necessity of his retiring to rest more regularly, at an early hour of the night, even before ten o'clock; there is nothing so injurious to a young person as sitting up late at night. Prevail on him to retire early, and I dare say his appetite, natural complexion and cheerfulness will all return in good time."

After that, she did try very hard to persuade

him to do as the doctor had recommended. But her earnest endeavors were all in vain ; they had no more effect on his conduct, than the summer's zephyr has upon the surface of a smooth, hard rock.

He would not yield for one moment to her persuasions, but continued to remain out as late and as often as he ever did. At last she gave up the point in despair, and watched in sorrowing silence, the sure and steadfast inroads, which some fearful malady was assuredly making on his youthful frame. In this manner several months passed away. At the end of the Winter he was unable to leave his bed ; then Mr. Guildhall visited him regularly every night, and always carried with him a small black bottle. Over the contents of that same bottle, the two gentlemen would sit, and laugh, and talk in a low voice until a very late hour. At last Mr. Gathschlachengen consented to call in medical advice.

After visiting him two or three times, when questioned upon the nature of his sickness, by his friends and neighbors, Dr. Green would look mysterious, shake his head very solemnly, and say—nothing. When Mr. Gathschlachengen had been bed-fast about four weeks, Mr. Guildhall was obliged to leave home, and spend a week

at Winterville. About three days after his departure, Mr. Gathschlachengen was suddenly siezed with violent convulsions. He lingered apparently in great agony, during the space of twenty-four hours, and then in violent contortions of face and form, he yielded his breath to the invincible conqueror, Death.

His wife was inconsolable at her irreparable loss, and craved so earnestly for the company of Minnie, that she was obliged to return to Silveryville. As Mrs. Maysin was expecting her son home very soon, it was no longer necessary that Merton should remain at Island Farm, he, therefore, also returned to his former home with Mrs. Gathschlachengen.

Minnie was very glad to leave the farm, and be once more at the side of her mother.

Things went on very smoothly with them all for several months. Merton refrained from visiting his old haunts, and was not tempted to break his sobriety. But, at the end of that time, fresh and unforeseen misfortunes thickened over their home.

Mr. Guildhall brought claims against the beautiful large dwelling, surrounded by a shady willow grove, in which they resided, and against every acre of their real estate, except a few lots

of little value in remote streets of the village. These lots were all vacant except one, on which there stood a small and very old house.

These claims he said, were in consequence of large sums of money he had loaned to Mr. Gathschlachengen. The astonished widow was loud in her protestations of the injustice and illegality of all his claims. But her earnest eloquence was in vain, the whole splendid property was put up for sale by the sheriff, and knocked off to the highest bidder. Of course that bidder was Mr. Guildhall, no one in the village dared bid against him.

He therefore took possession of the magnificent property at less than one fourth of its value, and even that small sum he was not obliged to pay, except by cancelling his claims against the estate. When Mrs. Gathschlachengen found she really had to move into her smaller house, she made a public sale of her furniture, from which she reserved only such articles as would be needed in her future contracted dwelling-place. This sale and her forced removal were bravely borne by the injured old lady, and she was far from sinking under it. On Minnie the removal had an exhilarating effect, as it weaned her from brooding over the death of her darling Rudy.

But on Merton the consequences were very disastrous. In looking around the village for an occupation, the only one offered him was that of bar-tender at the hotel. There was no choice to be exercised on the subject, he either had to accept it or nothing. He accepted, and was not in his new situation many weeks, before his conduct proved it to be very unsuitable.

Yet what could they do?

In this their sad dilemma, they unfortunately had not the religious faith and trust in the power and goodness of a Father in heaven, which are of such incalculable value to every son and daughter of Adam, who can flee unto them for aid and refuge when assailed by the storms and adversities of life.

How miserable, hopeless and helpless they all were, because of a want of Faith!

CHAPTER XI.

MANY CHANGES.

During three years, after Minnie's removal to her new home, I saw her very seldom. She spent them sadly pining over the sorrows of her lot in life, and in attending to the care of her children. For their support she was almost entirely dependent upon the few remaining resources of her mother. In order to make them last as long as they could, they lived as economically as was possible; did all their own work, kept a frugal table, and spent very little on their wardrobe. Merton retained his situation; he had sense enough left to realize the importance of keeping it. The company he there met, suited his taste, which reconciled his mind to the servility of his office.

He drank freely, but managed to keep sober during his business hours, and when they were concluded, he indulged unrestrainedly in the use of the bottle. He paid his mother-in-law two dollars per week for boarding his wife and

children. Those one hundred dollars a year, formed the sum total he ever spent for his family. He boarded at the hotel.

During these three years, as I have already stated, I saw very little of Minnie. As they passed swiftly, but sadly, over our village, many changes occurred in my own family. These changes I will not loiter to describe, but merely glance at; for this is not a history of my own life, but of poor Minnie.

In the first year, all my remaining single brothers and sisters were married, and removed to their own homes. Some in, and others out of Silveryville, so that our house and my beloved parents were left to my individual care and attention.

On that account I was kept closely at home, and knew very little of what was going on among my neighbors. About the middle of the second year, my mother was taken sick—after lingering three months, she died. Soon after her funeral was over, my father became the victim of an incurable illness, and was kept on the bed of suffering almost a year. Then at last, he too died, and I was left alone in the house in which I was born. Soon after my father's death, I commenced teaching school for my own support.

Several homes were offered to me, but I preferred to keep my own.

All these "chances and changes of this mortal life," left me without leisure time, in which I could look around me, and see what events and circumstances were transpiring among my neighbors. Therefore, Minnie and I seldom met; we were both too much absorbed in our own domestic duties, to think of, or visit each other very often. But at the end of these three years, I found myself quietly setted down in my new state of affairs; the hurry and the excitement of the domestic trials through which I had passed, and that, like an impenetrable cloud, had been wrapped around my social feelings, hemming them in on all sides of my mental vision, and concentrating all my thoughts within the narrow limits of my own home, were now passed away from my domestic horizon, so that I could see clearly around me, and again feel an interest in other affairs than those of my own household.

Soon after this mental and domestic clearing-up time, I one evening took my knitting basket—my knitting was never forsaken under any circumstances—and went to make a social call on Minnie Malvers.

I found her with two babies on her lap, one aged three months, and the other fifteen. Nursing, washing, dressing, undressing, feeding and putting to rest her numerous family of children, seemed to be all that she could find time to do.

Yet, busy as she was, she appeared very glad to see me. She was not over-run with visitors.

The friendly calls of her neighbors had lately grown to be "few and far between," so that my call to spend the evening was a real treat to the over-tasked and over-worried young mother.

Mrs. Gatschlachengen was seated between a table and a large clothes-basket. In the basket were sundry heaps of children's clothing that needed mending or repairing of some kind. On the table were high piles of stockings, and of wearing apparel, which she, that day, had passed through the operation of patching, mending, darning, or button and string or strap replacing; to patch, mend, darn and fix up, to fix up, darn, mend and patch, and otherwise repair or alter children's more than half worn out garments, seemed to be the constant occupation of her hands.

CHAPTER XII.

A SAD DEPARTURE FROM SILVERYVILLE.

A few weeks passed away after my last visit to Minnie; then her mother suddenly sickened and died. She was buried with much less magnificence than had been her husband.

Not many weeks passed over the sorrowing heart of the mourning Minnie, before her grief for the loss of one who had ever been to her an affectionate and beloved mother, was increased almost to despair, by being informed that she died deeply in debt to one of the village storekeepers. As she and Merton were destitute of the means of paying that debt, the house in which she was living had to be sacrificed under the sheriff's hammer. Where then could she seek shelter for herself and children?

In the beginning of the following Spring, Minnie was obliged to leave the home that had till then sheltered her and her children. Merton's engagement as bar-tender, at the same time, came to a close. There then appeared no open-

ing for him in Silveryville, and he therefore resolved to try his fortune in Philadelphia. I did all I could to persuade him not to go to that overcrowded place, and recommended to him the open, free, pure air of the far West, where, in a few years, his children would be sure of obtaining employment and independence. But my persuasions were all unheeded. He preferred trying life in Philadelphia. Alas, for him! How many make the same sadly unfortunate mistake!

One day, when they were all ready to begin their journey towards the city, with their few worldly goods and their children all stowed together, in a large, covered farm wagon, Minnie came in to bid me a hurried farewell.

While we were standing, and saying our last parting words, I observed that she several times put her hand over her pocket, as if there was something in it which she feared she might lose. Feeling a curiosity to know what it was, and wishing, at the same time, to cheer her with a jest, I said, laughingly,—

"Minnie, have you hidden one of your babies in your pocket for safe keeping?"

"O, no," she answered, in a low whisper, and with a vain attempt to raise a smile—a

smile that would not come—and if it had come, it would have been speedily washed away in tears; for her tears would flow, in spite of her many vain efforts to check them.

"Not one of my babies, they are all too large to be carried in a pocket; but I have here a bundle of things that I do not want Merton to see; because, if he does, he will sell them. They are the last of our silver spoons, and the jewelry that was given to me by Mr. Gatschlachengen. They are all very dear to me, and I am resolved that they shall not be bartered off for bad liquor; nothing but the want of bread or medicine will ever make me willing to part with them."

She then turned to give me her last parting kiss; and as I held her hand, very sorrowfully, clasped in one of my own, I said—

"Write to me, Minnie, I will feel anxious to hear from you."

"Write! now, Dolly, how do you suppose I can ever find time to write, with so many children to take care of, and no one to help me? Do not expect it of me, dear Dolly."

"It would not require much time to write a few lines in a hurry. I would excuse all mistakes."

"No, no, Dolly, I will not write until I have some one to help me, nor until I will be able to live in a house to which I would not be ashamed to invite you to pay me a visit; now, adieu."

In the next instant she joined her husband and children.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MOVING—A VISIT TO PHILADELPHIA.

They went slowly down the road, and I stood a long time looking after them, with many sad feelings, and frequently asking myself the question, whether or not I would ever see them again. A moving of a family is to me always a melancholy and uncomfortable sight. It tells of the instability and variableness of all things earthly. There they went—the furniture, the cooking utensils, and the human treasures of that unsettled man and his wife—all heaped and packed up together in equalizing confusion; broom and sweeping-brush handles speared up above the crowded and motley collection, as if they intended to do all they could to ward off whatever ills or misfortunes might by chance

threaten to injure or molest their companions. Below the body of the wagon, were dangling various buckets and iron pots. Truly, there is no sign of comfort, or beam of pleasure, radiating from the view of a family moving. As I stood and gazed after that of Minnie and Merton Malvers, as it slowly proceeded down the road, I mentally thanked the good Providence that had, all my life through, protected me from the necessity of ever moving.

As I stood and gazed, with tear-dimmed eyes, I asked myself—

"Will I ever see Minnie again?"

My heart, and the echo of its warmest wishes, responded faintly, and with fearing despondence, the single word—

"Again?"

Whether the answer was an affirmative or a negative, was known only to the future; and that impenetrable, thickly veiled future would not reveal any other more satisfactory answer.

Days, weeks and months passed away, and I received no tidings of my unfortunate friends.

When they had been gone about three months, I wrote to Minnie, and told her that if she had not time to write to me, she should request Merton to inform me by letter how they were.

I waited a whole month, but no answer came. I then wrote to Merton, and earnestly requested him to tell me how they were doing. My letter to him also remained unanswered.

Time grew into passing months and years; time still rolled onward, and as it passed away, we heard nothing either from or about Minnie and Merton.

Meanwhile, one of my married sisters moved to Philadelphia. On the eve of her departure to the city, I earnestly requested her to make an effort to find out the fate and residence of Minnie Malvers.

She promised she would. When she wrote to me she stated that she could not discover any traces of our lost friends. By this time I began to hope they had left the city, and, perhaps, gone somewhere in the country. Gradually, I ceased to hope or expect ever to hear from them again. Another year passed away, and I had come to the firm belief that I would never see or hear from them.

The fall of the year was approaching; the arrangements and engagements, preparatory for the comfort and pleasures of the winter season, were entered into with the alacrity and hopefulness that are so fully indulged in at this busy

season, by all the inhabitants of Pennsylvania in general, and of Silveryville in particular.

My sister, Mrs. Janes, sent me a kind invitation to pass the approaching vacation, during the Christmas holidays, at her house in Philadelphia. I had never visited the city, and I did not wish ever to enter it. I dreaded the noise and confusion, the hubbub and hurry of its thronged streets—its bakers' bread, its bartered, bruised vegetables—and worst of all, its impure and unclean river water as a beverage, and, as necessarily, a component part of all its edibles. No, no; I did not wish to visit the dreaded, dirty city.

But I did wish very much to see the faces of my sister and her two children. She told me, in her letter of invitation, that if I did not pay her this strongly-desired visit, she would *never* again bring her children to Silveryville. So that, finally, the wish to see them vanquished my fears of the polluted Babel of a place, and I consented to make, for two weeks, an addition to its over-populated throng of a population. On the first day of my vacation, "with trunk, bandbox, basket and bundle," I embarked on board the railroad car for my first visit to Philadelphia. Long before I had time to get

used to my seat, to the rattle and rumble of the car-wheels, or to the piercing shrieks of the ferocious, fierce iron horse that was dragging us with such wonderful velocity through villages, hills, dales, farms and bridges, over streams and under groves, we entered the suburbs of the city, and exchanged our iron fire-horse for animals of a more steady and tractable nature.

"Why, is it possible," I mentally exclaimed, "that I have all my life lived *so near* the city and never known it? I always believed it was a long way off; and here I am in it before I have had time to look around me."

I was met at the depot by my brother-in-law and his children. Then safely escaped from the crowds of porters and cabmen of all sorts, sizes, colors and conditions, we were conveyed by a hired carriage to my sister's home. My brother-in-law, at that time, had not begun to ride in his own city equipage.

The remainder of that day I spent in rest, and in sitting at the front parlor window, looking at the amazing multitude of persons, and at the immense numbers and diversities of wheeled vehicles, which were constantly streaming through the streets—sister Ann lived in a corner house—passing that wonderful window in her front parlor.

Over and over again I asked my city relatives the question—

"Where are—where can all these people be going?"

They only laughed at my question, and refused to give it any satisfactory answer. There I sat, and watched, and wondered, and gazed at them, without ever being able to find out *where* they *were* going, or why they were all in such an incomprehensible hurry. They were driving, racing, and getting ahead of each other, as if a valuable premium were awaiting the arrival of the first one who should reach the goal to which they were proceeding; but where that goal could be, or what the nature of the prize after which they were all hurrying, my native village wit, or my city ignorance, would not communicate to my wondering and bewildered mind.

The next day my sister, Mrs. Ann Janes, decreed that we must, together, go on a shopping expedition. To this law, of course, I was not in the least opposed. On the contrary, I was as much elated in the anticipation of the treat of a city shopping excursion, as any child could be in the expectation of paying a visit to a toy shop.

I did not like the city—its houses, its hours, its habits, its water or its people—but I had fully made up my mind that I would like its shops and their contents.

As soon after breakfast as we could, we sallied forth and joined the busy and hurried throngs, which, to my amazement, were already passing through the streets, as fully bent upon going somewhere, as they had been on the previous day. Where they were going, I could not discover; but where we were going, I knew very well. We were going, as fast as our feet could, and our many crowding fellow walkers would allow them to carry us, to Chestnut street.

The first establishment we entered was a furrier's; and in it my sister presented me a handsome set of new furs. She said they were my Christmas gift. As the weather was excessively cold, they were proportionately acceptable. I had never before worn furs, and was now very thankful for them, and fancied, that with them on me, I could never suffer with cold.

After that, we went to a children's furnishing emporium, as the sign called it, and there we had to wait some time before we could be attended to.

Crowds, crowds, crowds! It seemed to me that there was nothing but a crowd everywhere. I felt that it was impossible to examine the goods on the counters, on account of the crowds of spectators in front of them. I soon noticed that there were more spectators than there were purchasers in that immense concourse. The attendants were all busy, but as calm, and composed, and unflurried, as if they were sitting, each one alone, in her own private apartment. How they managed to keep themselves so, surrounded as they were by such an assembly, I could not comprehend. Then, another fact surprised me very much; they were all handsome and all young. I wondered exceedingly how that "emporium" could obtain so many fine looking young maidens to take their places behind its counters. After we, or rather, after sister Ann, was through with her business at that establishment, we visited several dry-goods and trimmings stores; in some of them my sister made a few small purchases. She then led the way to a large dry-goods store on Ninth street; we there found quite as large a crowd of spectators and purchasers, as there were in the other stores on Chestnut street. While we were standing over the heater, to warm our feet, and

wait our turn to be attended to, my sister surprised me very much by informing me that I must, in this store, choose for myself the materials to make me a new cloak and dress.

I answered her that I was not in need of such articles; that the ones I already had were quite good enough. To which she answered—

"O, yes! they are good enough to wear in Silveryville, but not quite new enough to visit among Mr. Janes' friends, here in the city; at least they are not sufficiently fashionable, and you must have new ones; say no more about it, but tell me at once the colors you prefer."

As I well knew her firmness, I saw there was no use in trying to disobey her orders, and therefore, I stated the colors I liked best. But though she could, and did control my actions, and compel me to accept from her a new cloak and dress that I did not want, she could not, nor did not curb my thoughts on the subject; while we stood there waiting to be waited on by the busy attendants, my ideas ran on intently in the following strain:—

"If I had known she was intending to treat me in this manner, I would not have come out with her. This cloak was new the winter before last, and I am sure it as good now as it was the day

it was made; for I have not worn it a dozen times. And my dresses—my two silk dresses, both rich and fresh—although I have had one four years and the other six, they are as free from specks, spots, rents and wrinkles as they were when they were finished. It is true that four and six years are long periods; but what of that, when they have been but seldom worn, and as carefully used as I always use my things? As to their being unfashionable, what do I care if they are? And much less do I care about trying to please Mr. Janes' city friends; as if they are going to notice what I wear!"

But all these thoughts were unknown to my sister Ann, and would have been equally unheeded, as they were, if she had known them.

After much long waiting, and still much longer debating, comparing and examining a vast multitude of pieces of silk and cloth, a dress and cloak for me were finally cut and paid for. By this time I began to be weary and foot-sore, on account of so much standing and walking. I began to hope that Mrs. Janes would be willing to turn towards her home; for my part, I was already completely cured of my love of a city shopping expedition. But my sister, on the contrary, seemed as if she enjoyed

the wearying pleasures of it, as much as she did when they first commenced.

"Now," said she, "we must go to Second street and buy some trimmings."

In my blissful ignorance of the names of the streets, and of the distances between them, I proceeded with her to Second street; and by the time we reached the particular store at which she resolved the trimmings must be bought, I was exceedingly fatigued, for I was unused to so much walking.

My feet ached, and felt as if they were being baked in a furnace. My sister fixed her fancy upon a certain cloak trimming, the supply of which happened to be nearly out. The storekeeper told her that late in the afternoon there would be a fresh supply received from the factory, and that he would send it to her.

"No," said she, "I would rather come after it either this afternoon or to-morrow."

At last, to my comfort, we turned our faces homewards. As we walked along I said—

"O, my feet! my feet! what can ail my feet? They feel as if they must be blistered."

By the time we reached home, my feet were really blistered, and it was impossible to walk the streets any more that day.

As Mr. Janes and the children were not expected home to dinner, sister and I ate ours soon after our return. When we had dismissed our well-relished meal, she sat over the heater, reading, and I reclined on the sofa, nursing my feet.

At half-past three o'clock she went to the kitchen; in a few minutes she returned to the sitting-room, with a heavy cloud upon her brow.

"What is the matter?" I asked, in alarm.

"Why, that stubborn Lucy is not yet done ironing, and she will not attend the door-bell while she is ironing; she never will. And I would like so much to go after that trimming, and also after the dress-maker; if I only send after her, she will not come to-morrow, I know. What shall I do?"

"Let me attend your door-bell."

"Would you? O, dear, Dolly! if you will, I shall be so much obliged to you. But your blistered feet—do they not hurt you too much?"

"O, no; not with these soft cloth slippers you have lent me. With them on my feet, I can very easily attend the door-bell, and allow Lucy to finish her ironing in peace."

In five minutes, sister Ann was gone. Lucy in the kitchen, and I in the sitting-room, were the sole inhabitants of the house.

The handsome marble timepiece ticked, ticked, ticked, quite musically, and I enjoyed my repose luxuriously.

CHAPTER XIV.

ATTENDING THE FRONT DOOR-BELL.

When I entered voluntarily on my new office, I little thought of the effects that were in its train. I wondered, to myself, why it was that Philadelphians kept their doors locked and barred, as if they were afraid of their neighbors. As I was thus musing and thinking to myself upon the differences of city and country life, the door-bell gave a long, loud peal, that made me jump and hurry to the door as fast as I could, expecting to see there some of Mr. Janes' fashionable friends; but I saw before me a coarse looking man, with two large turkeys on his shoulder. He was very cold, and said—

"Does Mr. Kilpatrick live here?"

"No, he does not."

"Please to tell me where he lives?"

"I do not know. But wait a minute, I will inquire."

I went to the kitchen door and asked Lucy if she knew. She said—

"No, I don't; but I do know of several live Patricks, whom I wish were killed-Patricks; for they are the greatest nuisances in the street."

I was obliged to tell the shivering bearer of the two fat, festival turkeys, that I could not discover where he could find the residence of Mr. Kilpatrick, the owner of the said turkeys.

I wished to ask the poor fellow in, to warm himself, but was fearful that he might leave "his mark" in grease; in which case, a cloud might rest upon sister's brow, more than—who knows how long? and what the effect might be from Lucy's tongue, I did not dare to think of; therefore, the man was dismissed without any such kindness being offered.

In five minutes more, there was another ring at the front door-bell. When I opened the door, I saw before it a woman, with her hands and arms filled to overflowing with all kinds of brushes. She asked me to buy a brush. I never bought a brush in my life. I always get my brushes in exchange for butter and eggs, at the store in Silveryville.

"O, no, I do not," said I, "want to buy a brush. Will you not walk in and warm yourself?"

"O, no, thank you, I have not time to stop."

Then, after a pause of about ten minutes, there was another ring. When I answered it, a neatly dressed young lady handed me a religious tract, and she passed to the next house.

I did not ask her to walk in and warm herself; she looked so lovely and so pleasant, that I could not fancy *she* might or could be cold. I had scarcely seated myself on the sofa and begun to read the tract, when the bell announced the necessity of my going once more to the front door. This time, there stood before it a well attired, comfortable looking old gentleman, who asked me, very politely, if Mr. Till was at home.

"Mr. Till does not live here."

"Can you tell me which one of these houses he lives in."

"No, I do not know where he lives."

I resolved not to ask Lucy any more questions, because I did not like to hear her say she wished living people were killed.

Next, there came a ruddy looking, tall old man, decently though plainly clothed. He had a small basket on his arm, in it were lying a few books which he offered for sale.

Among them I espied a New England primer, in which it is rehearsed that,

In Adam's fall
We sinned all.

And,

Xerxes did die
And so must I.

Many long years had passed away since I had seen a copy of that time-honored old primer, with its quaint pictures and roughly set type. The sight of it carried my thoughts irresistibly to the days of yore, and to many by-gone scenes and circumstances.

The old man carried away with him one book less than he brought to the door; for, who could resist purchasing a book that was written in the days before the Revolution of this country, and one that was printed in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven.

Next there came two expensively dressed ladies, bedecked with flounces, flowers and feathers. They inquired if Mrs. Janes was in. When answered in the negative, they handed me their cards, which they took from beautiful silver cases.

After that I had a ten minutes rest, and was busy reading my new tract, when I was once

more disturbed by the door-bell. When I opened it, I saw before me a tall, delicate looking man, who was totally blind—a blind man walking alone in the streets of the city! Poor fellow! he could not walk fast enough to keep himself warm, and looked as if he was half frozen. In his hand he carried a large, black satchel. Before he had time to make known his business, I asked him to walk in and warm himself; then, gently putting my hand on his arm, I conducted him to a seat over the heater. He appeared really grateful for having an opportunity of warming himself. As soon as he was comfortably seated, he stated his business, which was to sell religious books.

"Does your living depend upon your business?"

"Yes, madam; also that of my wife and young child."

"Then," said I, "do you not think you would do better if you would sell other books besides religious ones?"

"Yes, ma'am, I know I would; but in selling them, I would not be working to advance the cause of my Divine Master's kingdom upon earth; therefore, I would rather live on less of this world's goods, and have the satisfaction of

knowing, that in a feeble way, I am serving my precious Saviour."

Ah, what a reproach were his words—so humbly, so meekly said—to those sight-gifted hundreds and thousands of people who care for none of these things!

Very soon he took his departure, and went on his groping, winding way through the thronged thoroughfares of the crowded city.

A good angel certainly must be ever at hand to guard and guide him in safety among the numerous dangers and perils which beset his way on all sides.

The next pull at our bell-handle, was made by two ragged urchins, who had large bundles of shingle shavings for sale. They were as merry looking and as light-promising as were the bulky burdens they bore.

After their departure, I had another fine, long rest of ten minutes, and I was again beginning to be interested in my new tract, when there was another pull given the bell-handle.

Upon opening the door, I saw standing before it a decently clothed young woman, holding in her arms a handsome child, aged about six months. It was clean, and neatly attired in a warm, blue merino cloak, with a very pretty

embroidered silk hood on its chubby little head. This well dressed and interesting looking young woman suprised me very much, by asking if I would be so good as to aid her by the gift of money or of old clothes. As it was too cold to stand at the door to hear all she had to say, I invited her to walk in and warm herself, while she was making known her circumstances. She said she had two other children, besides the infant in her arms; their ages were three and six years; that two weeks ago her husband had deserted her, and left her entirely unprovided with the means of living; that a kind lady up the street had just given her the cloak and hood her babe was wearing. She then took from under her arm an old, thin, white muslin bonnet, which she said the child had worn when she left home. That the same lady had also given her a dime towards the payment of her week's rent. She then requested me, very humbly, to try to do something for her relief. I gave her what I could, wrote down her name and residence, then promised I would try to bring her some children's clothing in a few days. She soon afterwards left me, seeming well pleased with my promise to visit her.

The next ring was given by a dull looking

lad, with a new coat from the tailor's for Mr. Janes. By the time it was received and safely put away, Mr. Janes and the children came home, Lucy had finished her ironing, and I was released from my attendance on the ringing of the front door-bell.

The next three days we had a very busy time of it, making my new dress, cloak, and some beautiful garments for the children. On the evening of the fourth day, we all attended a children's party at the house of one of Mrs. Janes' intimate friends.

The next morning, when sister Ann and I were by ourselves, I told her of the promise I had made to visit the interesting, young, deserted wife. She said she felt very sorry for the poor woman, and proved the truth of her words, by hunting up for me quite a large bundle of children's and female wearing apparel, which she said I was welcome to for her relief, provided I did not think it would be too much trouble to carry so large a burden. She was sorry she could not accompany me, but, owing to home engagements, she could not go out that day.

I started off alone, to find Mrs. Mary Stockk, No. 554 Pearl street. It was a long way from

sister Ann's house, and by the time I reached the place, I was weary of both my walk and burden. At that time, the houses in that street were unadorned by bell-pulls or front door-knockers. The night before there had fallen a deep snow, which, in many parts of my long walk, warded my feet from the hardness of the brick pavements, so that they were saved from being blistered. But they were as cold as ice. Having the large bundle to carry, I could not wrap my cloak tightly around me, and I suffered exceedingly with the cold, in spite of the new, warm furs I was wearing. I was very glad when, at last, I arrived at the house numbered 554, as I hoped that in it I could obtain a good warming. But when I knocked at the door, and it was opened, a short and single glance within it put to flight, very quickly, all my hopes of a warming and a rest. The room into which the door opened was entirely empty; not a single article of furniture, of any kind, in it. The door was opened by a half famished, slovenly dressed, rough haired, soiled faced, slip-shod, Irish woman. She occupied one of the upper rooms of the house. The lower room was untenanted, and its former occupiers, Mary Stockk and her three little Stockks, had moved

away, to some place unknown by the woman of the upper part of the house.

"Can you not," I inquired, "think of some person in the neighborhood who may be likely to know where I will be able to find her?"

"No; I don't know any of the neighbors."

At this time, another woman came from the next door, with a bucket in her hand, on her way to the public hydrant; she was quite as unprepossessing in her appearance; but seeing that I was inquiring after some one, she asked me whom I was seeking.

"Mary Stockk," I answered.

She pointed to a house on the opposite side of the street, and said:—

"There is a woman living in that house who knows Mary Stockk very well, and may be she can tell you where she has moved to."

I went to the house designated, and inquired for Mrs. Mary Stockk; but was informed that no one knew where she had moved to, as she had taken her departure very early one morning, while other people were asleep.

By this time, there were several bare headed, slip-shod, untidy women collected around me, and they all agreed in saying that Mary Stockk

did not tell any person in the neighborhood whither she had moved.

"I am very sorry," said I; "because I have brought this bundle of clothes for her, and I do not like to have the trouble of carrying it home again."

I said this, hoping that some one of the motley crowd around me would offer to relieve me of my burden, by saying she would accept it.

I felt afraid of offending their feelings, by offering to give it to any of them. One of the women then said—

"A few doors down the street there is a poor, sick woman, who has a house full of young children, whose husband also is very sick; if you don't want the trouble of carrying your bundle home, you had better give it to her; for she is a much better and nicer woman than Mary Stockk is."

I eagerly desired the speaker to tell me the number of the house, and, without waiting to ask the name of the sick woman, I started off to seek her, and, at the same time, to try to find the sight of a fire, for I was almost frozen. Arrived at the house, No. 532, I asked to see the sick woman, who had a sick husband and a house full of young children. I was directed to walk to the second story front room.

When I entered the apartment, I found there, not the squalor and sufferings of poverty which I expected to meet, but, on the contrary, there were visible on all sides, apparent marks of comfort and ease. There was a very pretty, bright new carpet on the floor, the bed was decked with new, gaily tinted chintz covers and curtains, snowy white sheets and pillow-cases. The whole appearance of the place was decidedly cheerful and cosy. There was a glowing fire in a clean, well polished stove, and near it I saw seated a very nicely bed-room dressed, middle aged woman of lady-like appearance; but she was exceedingly pale and emaciated; her eyes were very hollow, still, they were bright and beautiful. On her lap she held a ten days old bud of humanity, which was neatly dressed in a fine, white muslin frock and embroidered flannel shawl. Over the stove there was standing a kind and friendly looking matron, engaged in stirring a saucepan full of very nice looking gruel, studded with fine, large rais ns. Seeing all these marks of comfort, I felt it was hard to believe that I was in the abode of poverty, and I began to fear I should give great offence by offering to give the sick woman my bundle of cast-off garments. But one thing I was deter-

mined to secure, and that was a good warming for my half frozen hands and feet, by that solacing, hot stove. For that purpose I took a seat near it, and placed my bundle on the floor, beside my chair. Then I looked around me more leisurely, and was not long in making the discovery that although the room and the mistress of it—the sick woman and her young infant—were most comfortably provided for, there were still visible, unmistakable signs of poverty betrayed in the apparel of three or four little children, who were standing near their mother; though they were clean, they were dressed in garments that were most lamentably unseasonable and forlornly outgrown.

Still, I felt it to be a difficult matter to introduce the object of my visit, without wounding the feelings of the delicate looking invalid. At last I concluded to attempt it, somehow, by making the acquaintance of one of the children; for this purpose, I addressed one of the little boys, and said—

"Tell me your name, little boy."

He answered very quickly, and in a manner which seemed to intimate that he was proud of his name—

"Merton Malvers."

"Merton Malvers!" I exclaimed. "Why, I once had a relative by that name; come, now, tell me how you came to have his name given you!"

His mother then spoke, and said—

"Merton Malvers is his father's name."

"Merton Malvers his father! and are you his mother? Are you Minnie Malvers? O, Minnie! are you really Minnie Malvers?"

CHAPTER XV.

MINNIE'S NEW TRIALS AND EMPLOYMENT.

It was even so. Providence had, in a peculiar and mysterious way, conducted me to the presence of my long lost friend Minnie.

Poor Minnie! It was very hard to realize that I saw her, in that skeleton looking figure before me.

"O, Dolly! dear Dolly! said Minnie, as soon as she could speak; "my eyesight is so much impaired by my long sickness, that I did not recognize your face, but I thought I knew your voice, the moment I heard it; yet, as I knew you never liked the idea of visiting Philadel-

phia, I did not believe it could be your voice I heard. O, dear Dolly, I have seen hard trouble since I parted with you in Silveryville."

She then leaned her head on my shoulder, and wept very bitterly. At last I concluded I had better leave her to repose, with a promise to call again very soon. I advised her to lie down and try to compose herself to sleep, for I saw that she was very weak and entirely unfit to be out of bed.

Explanations and all conversation with her, I deferred until my next visit. I then handed her the bundle, saying that it contained some useful articles for the little folks. I then took my departure, greatly amazed at the sad condition in which I found her, at the many comforts by which she was surrounded, which so strangely contrasted with her children's clothing, and at my strange neglect in having failed to inquire after the elder children and their father.

Two days afterwards I called again to see Minnie, and found her looking a little better, and her children were already more comfortably clothed in garments which she and her nurse had altered for them, from the contents of the bundle I had given her. Soon after I entered, I inquired after Merton and her other children.

She told me that three of the latter were dead; that Merton was ill of paralysis, and in a very feeble state of mind. She was opposed to my seeing him, from which I inferred he was a pitiable looking object. After that, I called on her daily during the remainder of my visit in Philadelphia.

While I was sitting with her, she recounted to me some of the many sorrows which she had passed through, and in a way and time which will hereafter be explained in the following pages; I had entrusted to my confidence, the whole history of Minnie's troubles, from the time she left Silveryville until she was finally placed in a state of peace and comfort. This history is composed together in the following order.

When Merton Malvers was prepared to move to Philadelphia, he wrote to one of his friends there, and requested him to find him the *cheapest* house that could be procured in the city, and to send him the direction to it.

Merton had not passed a whole day in Philadelphia since his marriage, and as that was a long time ago, he was almost as ignorant of the mode of living in the city as I was. When he reached his new home that had been selected

for him by his friend, he found it was a small house, in a narrow lane or court, in one of the suburbs of the city, containing three single rooms, one above the other, and that its cheapness was its only recommendation—it was cheap enough —only four dollars a month for the rent of the whole house. Small as it was, its narrow limits contained sufficient space to hold his household furniture; but they were rather too small, to hold comfortably all the living members of his family.

But Merton, unfortunately, was so incurably in love with his bottle comforts, that he little heeded the welfare or accommodations of his wife and children. His comforts could not be supplied without money, and his present supply of that useful commodity was very low.

After he paid his first month's rent, which had to be paid in advance, before he was allowed to take possession, he had not more than two dollars in the world. The day after his arrival in town, he started out at an early hour in search of a situation. Fortunately before he went, he gave Minnie all his money except one shilling. He wished to be employed as a clerk, and he called on all his city acquaintances, which were not very numerous, to inquire if they knew where

he would be likely to find employment. The majority of the persons he called on, were not of the class who spend their time in being usefully employed, so that they did not afford him any benefit. The others were too much occupied with attention to their own affairs, to find time to think of him and his want of the means of living. After he had passed the greater part of the day, in vainly running about after his acquaintances, he spent his shilling for a few crackers and a large glass of strong whiskey punch. Then dispairing of ever finding employment through the influence of his acquaintances, he resolved to seek it among strangers.

Alas for him!

To seek for employment among strangers in Philadelphia, is as hopeless and as scornfully treated, as if one went about to make a living by pilfering and stealing. No one of the many rich merchants and store-keepers, to whom he applied in the course of the afternoon, would even look at him after they were aware of his object in calling on them—to obtain employment. They would not have done it, even if his breath had been untainted by the odor of the "worm of the still," but thus tainted as it was, they turned from him as fiercely as they would have done if

he had thrust toward them the deadly fangs of a viper.

He continued his unsuccessful attempts, until the stores were all closed; then turned towards his new home, feeling very sad, and in wretched spirits; also very faint from fatigue and want of proper food.

Ye rich men, to whom he had that day applied for employment, had you known how much good a few kind words, and a few moments' attention might have done him, would you not have given them to him? It is not certain that in his particular case your kindness would have saved him from the miseries which befell him and his suffering family, for he loved indulgence in immoderate drinking to such an extent, that perhaps all the kindness in the world might not have saved him; but his ruin might at least have been postponed for a while, and then you would have had the satisfaction of knowing that you had tried to save him. But alas, as it was, your cold and cruel unkindness to him, actually hurried him forward to meet his destruction.

While walking under one of the city lamps, he met a former drinking companion from Silveryville, who had come to Philadelphia to indulge in a greater spree than the steady habits of the

quiet village would allow him to partake of there. As soon as he saw him he said,

"Why, Merton, my boy, is that you? I was this minute wondering where I could find you, and here I catch you coming to meet me."

"I am right glad to see you," said Merton.

"So, Merton, you have come to town to live, have you? And what do you expect to do next, old fellow?"

"To judge from to-day's experience, I am going to *starve*. I have had neither dinner nor supper this day, and am without one cent of cash."

"What! here only one day, and hungry already? Serves you right, for not staying at home in the village, where no one ever starves. Philadelphia is a very fine place to visit when you happen to have plenty of money; but you'll never catch me coming here to live. But you must have something to eat, Merton, and then we will take the world easy; have a drink once more together, 'to drive dull care away' this night, no matter what may turn up to-morrow."

The two men then went into a restaurant, where they indulged very freely in fried oysters and strong liquor. They sat and drank and talked over old times until a very late hour in

the night, and then separated. The stranger sought a lodging at a neighboring hotel, and Merton, staggering onward, tried to find his new home; but on account of his mental faculties being in a peculiar and much abused state, he roved about ignorantly until after two o'clock in the morning; then, overcome with fatigue and inebriation, he sank into insensibility, and, at the same time, measured his length on a friendly cellar-door. In that condition and location he was found by the night police, who conveyed him to the station house. The next morning, at about ten o'clock, he was aroused from his stupor, by being conducted into the presence of his honor, the Mayor. As he was unable or unwilling to tell his name, or otherwise give a satisfactory account of himself, and being unable to pay the fine imposed for being intoxicated, he was sent below for thirty days. During the first and second days of his absence, Minnie, with the help of her two oldest boys, Harry and Charlie, busied herself in taking proper care of her children, and in cleaning and fixing up her narrow dwelling place. During these two days she was kept so constantly occupied, that she had not much time to spend in thinking of Merton's prolonged absence. She

was so much accustomed to his being out of sight, that she hardly missed him. But when her house cleaning and furniture fixing were all completed, she had time to reflect upon her situation, and became sadly perplexed and worried, not only on account of Merton's absence, but also about the question of how she should manage to obtain the means of living. The small sum Merton gave her when he left home was nearly all gone. How was her next supply of money to be procured? How was her next month's rent to be earned?

She despaired receiving from Merton the aid he ought to give her. In answer to all these important and puzzling questions, her first thought was of her needle. The needle! that implement of poor woman's stern necessity; the point on which so many loaves of bread are earned; the instrument with which so many untimely graves are dug.

But Minnie was among strangers. Would they employ her? She did not know; but she did know that she must try to earn bread for her children in some way. She went among her immediate neighbors in the court, and asked them if they could furnish her with some needle work, or direct her to some place where

she might procure some. But poor Minnie! The cheapness of her dwelling place had drawn her down to a latitude quite beneath the sphere of even the poor needle women of the city. She was on a lower grade than the one in which they moved, with all their poverty. Not one of her neighbors knew anything about needle work. One among them, named Sallie R. Bridd, who had a kinder heart than the others, and seemed to feel for her, told her that if she was in want of employment, she could tell her of a very good place where she could get a day's work regularly every week at washing, and another at ironing, for which she would be paid seventy-five cents per day, and generally receive some little present.

The idea of going into a stranger's kitchen, and washing and ironing for that stranger's wages, was agonizing to Minnie's feelings. But what could she do? Necessity and her hungry children compelled her to drag herself to the disagreeable duty of washing and ironing for their daily bread.

Those strangers were kind to her, and so well pleased with her work, that they recommended her to some of their friends, who also gave her two days employment every week.

While she was away from home, the house and younger children were left to the care and management of Harry and Charlie. The three dollars she earned kept them from utter destitution. At the expiration of thirty days, Merton was released from prison, and returned home to his wife. He did not tell her where he had spent those thirty days, but merely said he had been seeking employment without success. He changed his clothes, ate his dinner in silence, and then left the house, without ever inquiring or seeming to care how she had managed to keep herself and little ones from starvation, or how she had contrived to pay the next month's rent, which must be paid, or they would not be allowed to remain in the house. He seemed to be destitute of all thought or care of the wants of his wife and children. The day of his return happened to be a Friday, and Minnie was at home. As soon as he left the house, after eating his dinner, his wife told the children never to inform him that she went out to wash and iron until she would give them leave. She was afraid if he knew, he would forbid it.

Merton's ideas were so far from being spent on the welfare of his family, that they were all running wild on a very different question—a

question that absorbed every wish and desire of his heart. This question, so thrillingly important and interesting to him, was how he should manage to procure the means of obtaining a drink of liquor. His long abstinence in the prison had made him feel almost famished for the want of a drink more stimulating, than the cup of coffee he had taken as a part of his dinner. So intently was his mind fixed on this absorbing question, that he had not one idea to spare for anything else under the sun.

CHAPTER XVI.

CHARLIE AND HARRY.

When Merton left his home, it was with the firm determination of procuring a drink of liquor. He would have offered to sell some article of wearing apparel if he had known where to go for that purpose. Happily, he was yet too ignorant of life in the city to know where to find such a place. It was about half-past one o'clock when he left his home. He despaired obtaining employment among the mer-

chants and store-keepers. He feared to go to a hotel or restaurant, thinking he might there meet some of his acquaintances; and them he now felt he must for ever shun, on account of his late imprisonment. He believed they knew it, and would taunt him about it. All their haunts he resolved must be avoided in future.

He was greatly at a loss what to do. As he walked along, he came to a place where there were being erected a row of new houses. In front of the place there were large beds of mortar, and many piles of bricks. All that mortar and all those bricks he knew had to be carried to the building walls. He stopped short in his course before them, and said—

"Now, if I had a hod, I would even turn hod-carrier, for the sake of being able to procure a drink. Why should I not? who knows me here?"

Presently, one of the laborers stood near him; as he filled his hod with bricks, Merton said to him—

"How much per day do you earn at that work?"

"One dollar."

"It is very hard work, is it not?"

"Yes, until you get used to it; after that it is as easy as is any other hard work."

"I suppose so," said Merton; "between now and six o'clock you will earn fifty cents."

"Yes," said the man.

"Let me do it for you, while you take an afternoon's rest; and I will be satisfied with only twenty-five cents."

"No," said the man; "I cannot afford to sit idle and lose one-half of my half day's wages. My wife is sick, and I need all the money I can get this week. But I tell you what I can do; I have a hod at home that I will hire to you for a shilling a day; if you want to work at this trade, come here to-morrow morning, at six o'clock; I'll have the hod here for you, and speak to the boss about hiring you."

So saying, he toiled off with his full hod on his shoulder. Merton stood and looked after him, and said to himself—

"Have I come to this?"

"Yes, yes," he answered; "and glad of it, too; all I regret is that I cannot begin at once. How can I wait until to-morrow evening for a drink?"

He then continued his walk through the streets, asking himself again and again, how he could procure a drink.

As he passed along, he came to a place where

there was a heap of stone-coal lying on the street, while a woman and a child were carrying it, in small quantities, to their cellar.

He stopped the woman, and said—

"I will carry that coal in for a shilling."

"No," said the woman, "I cannot afford to give a shilling; I am very poor."

"Well, then," said Merton, "I will carry it in for a sixpence."

"Very well," said she, "I will give you a sixpence."

That hard earned sixpence was soon turned into fire-water, and poured where many hundred dollars' worth had preceded it.

The next morning, at six o'clock, he met his new friend, the knight of the hod, and by him he was instructed in the art of carrying "cities on the shoulders." At the end of the week, he bought himself a new hod, and worked with it the remainder of the building season.

That day, when he went home to his dinner, he told his wife, in the presence of his children, that he had at last succeeded in obtaining employment.

"And what at?" said his wife. "To judge from the appearance of your clothes, one would naturally suppose that you had been rolling

about in a brick-yard, instead of being employed."

"But I was employed; and that is the reason why my clothes are in their present plight. They will be worse before they are better, for I have turned hod-carrier."

"A hod-carrier!" said Minnie. "O, Merton! how could or did you think of such a thing."

"Well, I had to do something, you know."

The older children laughed, and wisely thought—as children will often do—that hod-carrying could not be any worse for him than going out washing and ironing was for their mother.

But did the proceeds of the hod-carrying labors benefit Minnie or her children?

Very little. Now and then he would give her a dollar; but the main support of the table and the month's rent always had to be eked out from the hard earned washing and ironing fund. The families for whom Minnie worked were kind and benevolent people, and often made her presents that helped her very materially in the support of her children.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of every week, she worked out. On these days she would give Merton his dinner in the morn-

ing, to take with him; it was invariably neatly put up in a clean napkin and small basket. As she gave it to him she would say—

"You need not come home to dinner to-day, because I will be too busy to cook."

He never asked or cared what she was so busy about. On Friday and Saturday she was kept very much busied in cleaning her own house, and in keeping their scanty wardrobe in the best order she could.

In this way, she worked and toiled far beyond her physical strength, through the Spring and beginning of Summer. Merton spent nearly all his wages in liquor. Harry and Charlie were two fine boys, and a great comfort to their mother. Adversity and hard work had made them prematurely thoughtful and attentive to the wants and wishes of their gentle mother.

One evening, after they went to bed, the other children being asleep, their father out, and their mother down stairs sewing, Harry said to his favorite brother—

"Charlie, it is too bad that mother has to work so hard, when all she earns only keeps us from starvation."

"O, it does more than that!" answered Char-

lie; it pays our rent, and keeps us from being turned out of doors."

"But I wish," said Harry, "that she had not to work so much; she never gets any rest. I wish we could do something to help her."

"We do help her, Harry, as much as we can; you carry in all the water she uses, and I carry up the coal from the cellar; we run the errands, hold the baby whenever she tells us, and we do a great many other things every day of our lives."

"O, yes, Charlie, I know we do; but what I mean, is to help her earn money, so that she need not go out washing."

"I wish we could, too; for I don't think washing agrees with her."

"I know it does not; don't you see how pale she is growing, and what a bad cough she has?"

"Yes, Harry, I see she suffers very much; but I do not see what we can do more than we are doing, while we are such little boys as we are. After awhile we will be bigger, and able to work like men; then we will do something to prevent her working so hard."

"Yes, Charlie, but *after awhile* is a long way off, and I want to do something to help her now, before she gets sick and dies."

"Well, Harry, I will tell you what George Bridd told me this morning, when I met him at the end of the court; he said, that every Saturday, because there is no school then—he goes to school every other day in the week, you know—I wish we could go to school, too; O, dear! we cannot do anything like other boys. I wonder what is the reason? do you know?"

"No matter what the reason is, but tell me what you were going to say about George Bridd."

"O, yes! sure enough!" said Charlie; "I almost forgot what I was going to say about George; I guess I must be getting sleepy."

"You need not think of being sleepy, for you shall not sleep a wink this night, until you tell me what George Bridd said."

"He said, that on every Saturday morning, he goes to Fairmount and catches ever so many catfish, and sells them to his mother."

"What does she do with ever so many?"

"She skins them, ties them in bunches, and carries them through the streets, and sells them to people who fry and eat them."

"Well, of all that, I don't see any use to us."

"If you don't I do."

"Well, then, you see more than I do, if you are half asleep."

"You know I always am the smartest."

"Yes, I know you are, but I don't think you are smart enough to make George Bridd's catfish of any use to us."

"I know we can, if mother will let us."

"How?"

"If she would give us some money to buy fishing tackle, we might go out with him and catch fish too.

"May be his mother would not buy them from us."

"O, yes she would! for George said she bought fish from other people, because he could not catch as many as she can sell."

"You are a smart boy, Charlie, that is true."

"I told you I was."

"To-morrow we will ask mother about it, and see what she will say."

"Yes; but don't say one word about it before father or the other children."

"Not I, indeed! if he knew we had any money, he would take it from us.

"Yes, and put it where he does his own."

"We all know where his goes; we would not want ours to follow his."

"If it did, it would not help mother much."

"Only help her to more sorrow; and poor, dear mother! she has enough of that already."

"Indeed she has."

"Well, let us hope that we will catch heaps of fish, and make money enough to pay our rent."

"And buy us something to eat; then she can live without going out to wash."

Full of these hopeful plans and new ideas, the boys at last fell asleep. They profoundly slept the healthy sleep of busy, earnest childhood.

What a blessing and refreshment it was to their growing bodies, and to their expanding intellects.

The next morning, according to agreement, they made known to their mother their grand fishing project.

She did not anticipate very largely on the profits of the proposed speculation, but with maternal fondness for her noble boys, she wished to encourage their ambitious desires of aiding her in earning an honest living. She also considered that the fishing excursion would be a pleasant treat and healthy recreation for the poor little fellows, who were so closely confined to the house and narrow court.

Ever since Mr. Emgreen's death, Minnie and

Merton had ceased to attend a place of public worship on Sunday. The habit of so doing, if once broken, is very seldom renewed.

Therefore, although Merton and Minnie Malvers rested from their weekly toils on the Sabbath, it was to them not a season of mental or spiritual improvement. And now, even if they had wished to go to church, or to send their children either there or to Sunday school, their inability to provide either them or themselves with decent clothing would have prevented them. Hence it was, that Harry and Charlie were growing daily stronger and stronger in a state of natural ignorance. Their minds were allowed to run wild in the mazes of human depravity; yet, in their case, that depravity was of a milder form than is often met.

Their minds had in them many gentle qualities, which rendered them very lovely children; there seemed to be naturally more of good than of evil in their disposition. With pious and careful training, they would probably have been beautiful examples of youthful Christianity. As they were, sadly ignorant and neglected in their religious training, they were still very docile, kind and affectionate to all who had any intercourse with them.

Their mother indulged their hopes about the catfish excursion, and procured for them the required tackle; it did not cost a great deal, and she was so glad to see the hopefulness with which they anticipated a grand success, that she really enjoyed the pleasures of the preparation for it almost as much as they did.

Several Saturdays they went on their weekly trips to the Schuylkill, and on each trip they caught a greater number of fish; as they became more accustomed to the art, they were more successful in the operation of taking them.

Still, they were disappointed at the slow progress they made in collecting money, because they did not realize from the sale of their fish as much as their mother did by her washing and ironing.

Yet they persevered in their efforts, and continued making them every Saturday, still hoping and hoping on, that after awhile they would be more efficient, and make as much, or even more money than their mother did.

One day they went out, full of happy hopes and of bright anticipations. George Bridd was not well, and did not accompany them that day. The sky was cloudy, and they thought the fish would bite better than usual. Arrived

at the side of the Schuylkill, and waiting some time in silence for the beginning of a good success, they found the fish were very obstinate, and would not bite. They were on the point of feeling sadly disappointed, when a full grown fisherman, with whom they had made an acquaintance, came near them and said—

"What luck have you this morning, boys?"

"Very poor, indeed," said Harry.

"I am," said the man, "going up the bank a little way, to borrow a boat from a friend; then I intend to go to the middle of the dam, where I expect to fill my basket in a very short time."

"O," said Charlie, very eagerly, "I wish we could go with you; we have never yet even half filled ours, and we would like so much to see it full."

"Yes," said Harry, "we would like very much if we could go with you, and catch a large number of fish."

The man looked at the anxious boys before him, and wondered to himself what could make them so desirous to catch a large supply of fish, and he resolved to gratify their wishes. But before telling them that he would take them with him, he asked them about the reason why

they wished to go, what they intended to do with their fish, the name of their mother, and where she lived. He then said—

"What do you do with the money you get for your fish?"

"We give it all," said Harry—"every cent—to our mother to help her pay our rent."

"Well done, my boys!" said the man; "if that is the way you spend your money, I will be very glad to take you with me to the middle of the dam, and we will have a gay time of it I hope."

Very soon they were all three seated in the narrow fishing skiff, which was a very small affair, worked by two oars and a small rudder.

CHAPTER XVII.

FAIRMOUNT.

When they reached the middle of the dam, the boys were greatly delighted with the beauty and novelty of their situation. The grassy banks, the green mounds, the brightly verdant foliage of the trees and shrubbery of Fairmount, con-

trasted richly with the white fences and the red gravel walks, as they wound their winding way up the sides and around the top of the mount.

The building of the water-works establishment, was of itself an attractive feature in the fairy-like scene around them. The clatter, rushing, roaring noise of its never ceasing steam-worked machinery, was an enlivening sound to their listening, young ears. The wire suspension bridge, a little way below them, looked like a piece of white lace, made in some gigantic loom, of Dame Nature's own handiwork; it hung so gracefully, so etherially, in its outstretched span across the Schuylkill, that it was hard for the beholder to realize that it had been placed there by the bungling hand of man. It was so bright, so charming in its loveliness, that it looked as if it must have grown naturally where it was then seen. The piered and heavier permanent bridge, which, lower down the river, crossed it at Market street, with its lumbering, heavy sides, and its uncouth, cumbersome roof, contrasted very strongly with the wire bridge.

The two together seemed to form a matrimonial pair of bridges; the one a mark of grace and beauty, the other of strength and utility.

The gay gardens, the cultivated fields, and the

green groves, of the background of the picture on the West side of the proudly curved river, dotted here and there, as they were, with handsome houses—country seats of rich Philadelphians—with neat cottages, the permanent dwelling-places of many of the less opulent citizens, who were still in sufficient prosperity to be able to own and occupy their own pretty homes in the sweet, free air of the country, and who, by the aid of horse power, could rest in their cottage homes at night, and still attend to their fatiguing duties in the heated, crowded stores, offices and warehouses of the closely built streets of the city.

Then the horse power canal boats, as they passed up and down the narrow channel, with their heavy cargoes of black, but brightly beaming coal heaps, as they approached the city, the empty ones as they passed the full ones, on their departure towards the mining regions, glided more speedily as they passed up the water, between the boundaries of the canal, gave an animated and busy expression to the features of the scene around the dam.

Then the noisy and puffing steamtugs, that were to be seen here, there, and almost everywhere on the surface of the river, below the

dam, hurrying about, from place to place, in their own peculiar sphere of propelling shallops, and sloops, and boats of various kinds, to a variety of places. It was, indeed, a bustling and enchanting scene, which was then presented on all sides, to the admiring eyes of our triplet of honest and industrious fishers.

It was beautiful, even then, in the dark and cloudy state of weather. O, then, how superbly magnificent must it ever be when viewed in the bright effulgence of an unclouded and beaming sun, canopied by a clear, blue sky, or on a moonlight night, when the rays of the lovely nocturnal orb are illumining every point within their reach. Yes; it was a lovely sight even then, on that damp and cloudy Saturday morning. Cheering and beautiful, also, were the hopes and faces of Harry and Charlie. Aye, in spite of their poverty, their irreligious training, their inebriate father, their sorrowing mother—her wearysome, toil-worn life, his sinfully neglectful conduct, their own joyless days, and of their fears about the future, and about their dear mother's health—in spite of all these tiresome afflictions, which, like so many dark and threatening clouds, covered the sky of their present existence—in spite of all these disad-

vantages—when they saw the many beauties by which they were so abundantly surrounded, they, in some measure, forgot their home misery, and felt very happy in the enjoyment of the passing hour. To them, at that time, the world seemed very fair, life very precious, and their young hearts were hopeful.

Presently, large drops of rain descended; the air was very still and sultry. In the West, there was gathering a black, heavy cloud, that, by contrast, made the hazy ones covering the other parts of the sky, which before had seemed so dark and heavy, now appear almost bright and light. The man looked towards the black cloud, and said—

"I am afraid, boys, we are going to have a heavy shower."

"O, never mind if we do," said Harry, cheerfully; "we will not melt; fishermen must not be afraid of a little water, you know."

Then there came a rush, a roar, and a long sweep of violent wind from the cloud in the West; instead of sending out a shower of rain, it spent its mighty force in lashing gusts of wind. The dam was instantly covered with short, foaming waves. The man became exceedingly alarmed, for he was not much accustomed to

the management of oars. The boat rocked and tumbled about the frothy waves like a piece of cork.

The man lost his presence of mind, and in his confusion, he moved the oars in a wrong direction, which, added to the force of the wind and the swift current, almost immediately bore the frail little skiff to the brink of the dam falls. One moment it balanced itself half way over the edge of the dam, and in the next it pitched, keel uppermost, into the foam at the foot of the falls. The man was a good swimmer, and soon reached the surface of the water and grasped at Harry, and could have rescued him from all danger had he permitted him to keep hold of him. But Harry, seeing his brother Charlie buffetting with the waves one instant, then sink beneath them, he screamed—

"Charlie! Charlie! wait one minute, and I will save you, Charlie!"

As he said these words of agony, he tore himself from the grasp of the man, and then he too, sank beneath the surface.

One of the small steamers put out a boat instantly, and tried to save the boys. Their bodies were rescued, but too late to save their lives. The vital spark in them was extinguished.

The man was properly taken care of, and provided with dry clothing, at a public house in the neighborhood. Then, with a heavy heart, he went in search of the boys' mother, to prepare her, as well as he could, to hear the sad tidings of which he was the bearer. When he presented himself before the bereaved mother, there was no need of words to prepare her to hear something very terrible. His haggard face and trembling frame betrayed it. Minnie's first thought flew towards her husband, and she fancied that he either must be killed or badly injured; under this impression, she screamed, and said—

"My husband—what do you know of him? Where is he? Is he much hurt?"

"Ma'am," said the man, "I know nothing of your husband; I never saw him; but your boys—your sons—Harry and Charlie—"

Here the poor man was obliged to stop; his sobs and groans choked his utterance, and he turned even more deadly pale than he was before. He now, more fully than ever, realized the immense keenness of the blow which he was doomed to inflict upon the heart of that sorrowing and feeble woman; he feared the news would be more than she could bear, and that she, too,

would sink beneath it to the dark silence of death, even as her precious sons had done, beneath the bubbles of the foaming water.

She wrung her hands, and in a heart-rending tone of voice she said—

"O, my sons, my darlings! do not say they are hurt! I cannot bear to think of their being in danger. But, ah, good sir, they must be, or you would not act the way you do."

She then wrung her hands, threw herself on a chair, and screamed and wept aloud, even before she was informed by words, of her hopeless loss. Some of her neighbors, hearing her loud cries, gathered around her. After they found out from the man the cause of her vehement sorrow, they kindly insisted upon leading her up-stairs to her bed. There she remained the remainder of the day.

Olimond, the next oldest boy, was sent out to try to find his father; but, as usual, he was not in his proper place—a place a drunkard never occupies—he came home without being able to find him.

The fisherman then returned to the vicinity of Fairmount, where the drowned bodies were still lying, waiting the arrival of the coroner, to hold an inquest over them. This inquest the

fisherman was obliged to attend, and very much he dreaded the result. He greatly feared he might be pronounced guilty of the crime of causing the death of the boys, although he knew he did all he could to save them, and that he would have shared their fate if he had not been a strong and expert swimmer.

The inquest met at four o'clock in the afternoon; at about five o'clock they gave in the verdict, that the boys came to their death by accidental drowning. Thus, the man was cleared from the claims of the law, but the clamorings of his conscience were not so easily satisfied. He never could forgive himself for the mismanagement of the oars, by which their destruction was partly caused.

After the inquest was concluded, the fisherman procured two broad pine boards and placed the bodies on them; he then hired a furniture car to convey them to the home which they had left that morning—their physical frame in perfect health—the sorrows of their young hearts beautifully tinted and soothed into calmness, by the hope of being able to lighten the burden of their mother's weekly toil; now they were returning to that same home, their bodies so soon gone—"dust to dust, ashes to ashes"—

their hopeful hearts for ever hushed, their filial hopes for ever blasted; and, instead of being the lighteners of their mother's burden of toil, their untimely and sudden death had inflicted on her often wounded spirit, the hardest and heaviest blow which, till then, it had ever received.

By the time the car reached the court in which Minnie lived, it was quite late in the afternoon, and it was met at the entrance by her kind neighbor, Mrs. Sallie R. Bridd. She had hurried through her fish selling that afternoon, more than usual, for she rightly guessed that when the bodies would reach home, her services would be required in the house of mourning.

With her robust frame and excellent health, her strength of mind and body was almost equal to that of a man's. Such things as delicate nerves and trembling fears, or superstitious dread of coming in contact with deceased humanity, were all beyond her comprehension. While the car, with its ghastly burden, was backing to the curbstone, she placed four chairs in the proper position, in the coolest part of the room; then assisted the driver of the car carry the dead ones in the room, and place the boards on which they were lying, on the chairs.

She then procured, from her own home, two clean, white handkerchiefs and a sheet; she folded the hands upon the two breasts, closed the yawning jaws, bandaged them up tightly, then closed for ever the four glazed eyes, and placed weights upon them.

When these kind duties were fulfilled, the dear, departed ones looked as if they had been charmed away from more than half the horrible hideousness of death, which is so frightful. They are painful duties; and, alas, how many of us would be willing to shrink cowardly away from performing them! She then spread the clean, white sheet over the whole havoc, "which death, by drowning," there had wrought.

Then she went to a certain drawer, in her own room, and drew from it two nicely folded pieces of black crape and white ribbon. Sadly she viewed those mournful relics of her own past, painful bereavement; she then tied them on the door-knob and window-shutter of Minnie's dwelling.

Mrs. Bridd knew, very well, that Mrs. Malvers had not the means of procuring a decent burial for her lost treasures; no one could enter her scantily furnished abode, without coming to the conclusion that poverty had set a seal of

want upon it. She knew, also, that to apply to the county for the required aid, would be equivalent to deferring the funeral to an unpleasant, and perhaps, unbearable period.

Merton had not yet returned home; and as his habits were, by this time, well known to his neighbors, Mrs. Bridd concluded his presence would not be of much benefit if he should come. She, therefore, acted on her own responsibility, and resolved to lose no time in consulting either Minnie or Merton. She hastily attired herself in her best apparel, and walked as hurriedly as possible, to the office of the nearest undertaker, and ascertained the lowest sum for which he could bury the two boys. She then hurried to the yard gate of Mrs. Sansonn, for whom Minnie was in the habit of washing. When her loud knocking was answered by Essie, the cook, she said to her:—

"Essie, is Mrs. Sansonn at home?"

"Yes, she is," said Essie.

"Then please to tell her I want to see her for something very particular."

"She will," said Essie, "want to know all about your business with her before she will either come down, or allow you to go up to her; and so, to save trouble, you may as well

tell me what it is before I go up to tell her about it."

Mrs. Bridd was out of patience at being thus hindered by delay, and said—

"Essie, you know Mrs. Malvers, the nice little woman who washes here, don't you?"

"Yes, and sure I do; what about her?"

"You know, she had two fine little sons, named Harry and Charlie."

"Yes; she told me about them many a time, and said they were the greatest comfort of her life."

"And so they were, Essie; but now they are both dead; they were drowned to-day, at Fairmount."

"Well, Mrs. Bridd, what of that? Sure, ye're not after wanting Mrs. Sansonn to bring them to life, are ye?"

"No, no, Essie, of course not; but you know, when we lose our children, we wish to see them decently buried, and not to give them up to the county, to be buried in Potters field."

"Ah! that's what ye want, is it? ye want Mrs. Sansonn to help bury the dead?"

"Yes, Essie, that is what brought me here."

"Now that I know ye're business, me darlint, I will go up and see if she will have time to tend to it."

Mrs. Sansonn, after a few minutes' delay, sent down word that Mrs. Bridd might walk up stairs to the parlor.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SUMMER PARLOR.

It was a large, airy room into which Mrs. Bridd was conducted by Essie. There were three stately windows on one side of it, opening upon a beautiful flower garden, in which bloomed and glowed in their vernal splendor, flowers of many hues, and natives of many distant lands. The floor was covered with straw-colored matting, of very fine texture, made in Asia; the chairs and sofas were covered with glossy, white linen, neatly fringed. The windows, the mirrors and large framed pictures that decorated the walls, and two elaborately carved, fancy tables, were all draped with richly embroidered lace.

This transparent, snow-white drapery gave a cool, refreshing aspect to the apartment, which fully entitled it to the name of the "summer

parlor." In the centre of the room there was a small, white marble table; near it sat a handsome young lady—Miss Sansonn—clothed in white muslin; she was occupied in reading a new magazine. Mrs. Sansonn was reclining on one of the sofas, fanning herself with a light, feather fan.

When Mrs. Bridd had made known her errand, Mrs. Sansonn said, very feelingly—

"Poor thing! I am very sorry for her; yes, certainly, I will be glad to help relieve her; take this note, and tell her I am very sorry for her sad loss."

"Thank you, thank you, ma'am, very much," said Sallie R. Bridd.

"Will she be able to come here, as usual, next Monday?"

"Indeed, I do not know, ma'am."

"You will have the funeral some time to-morrow, I suppose."

"Yes, ma'am, we must bury them to-morrow, because we cannot afford to buy ice to preserve them."

"Well, if they are buried to-morrow, she can come on Monday, of course."

"If she is well enough, I suppose she can; she is not able to hold her head up, now; she

is very low; indeed, I think she is almost broken hearted."

"I am afraid her husband is not worth much, is he?"

"Ah! how can he be, when he drinks nearly all he earns."

"That is very dreadful! Well, Sallie, if she cannot come on Monday, I will depend on you to procure me a substitute. We expect to leave town on Wednesday, and, therefore, we must not be disappointed next week, but must have our washing and ironing done before Tuesday evening."

"Well, then, Mrs. Sansonn, if Mrs. Malvers cannot come, I will take care to find you another washer and ironer."

When Mrs. Bridd had departed, the young lady said—

"Mother, who is that woman?"

"Mrs. Sallie Rose Bridd."

"Mrs. Sallie Rose Bridd? Her voice sounds exactly like that of the old woman who serves us with catfish; what a shrill, piercing sound it has!"

"She is the same woman who serves us with fish, and she first recommended Mrs. Malvers to me."

"Why how nicely she looks! I did not know that a fish huckster could ever look as genteelly as she does."

Then, after a long pause, the young lady added—

"Mother, I wish you would let me run over to the court, to see if I cannot be of some use to poor Mrs. Malvers."

"O, hush, my daughter! do not think of such a thing; the idea of your having seen the miseries of her situation, would haunt my mind so vividly that I would not be able to sleep the whole night."

"I wish I could go. Poor thing! she must feel so very, very sorry."

"Yes, of course she does; but you could not help her any, or remove her sorrow."

"May I go over to-morrow morning and see if she needs anything?"

"No, no, child; do go on with your reading."

If Miss Sansonn had visited Minnie, what a beam of comfort her presence would have carried with it!

The poor greatly need gifts of money, but they still more need the blessed and rare gifts of kindness and tender hearted sympathy. The former they often receive, the latter, how seldom!

Unless poor persons in pecuniary distress are visited, they cannot be fully or wisely relieved.

But may kind heaven, in mercy, defend them from the cold, heartless, haughty and cruel visits which are sometimes paid them by visiting committees. Visits paid by force, and not from choice.

Heaven help the poor from receiving such visits! for there is neither kindness, nor sympathy, nor charity in them; however, they are sometimes misnamed, by being called "charitable visits;" kind or sympathizing, even their payers do not consider them.

But really kind visits, such as one human being might be expected to pay another, these are the visits to widows and orphans in their affliction, that will tend very materially towards keeping those who make them, unspotted from this wicked world; their religion will be of the nature of the Great One who, while on earth, unfalteringly went about doing good. Such visits as He paid, will always carry with them their own reward, and those who bestow them will realize, in their own happy experience, that it "is more blessed to give than to receive." Many such visitors there are, and they are more like angels than men—carrying peace and

comfort with them wherever they go. May Heaven's richest blessing ever rest upon them! This world would be a dreary place without them. In the same proportion, it would be more lovely than it is, if their number could be increased; they are like gentle drops of dew, which silently, but steadily and infallibly refreshen the soil, and keep alive the languishing plants suffering therein—languishing from lack of prosperity—even as the herbs of the field languish in a time of drought; yet they live on, blessed, night by night, with the dews of heaven.

Miss Sansonn tried to read, but she could not; after a long pause she again ventured to speak, and said:—

"Mother, you remember when my little brother died? the darling! how much we loved him! how bitterly we lament his loss! Then, do you not remember, dear mother, that in the evening, about this same hour, Mrs. Iredom came in and read to you a few passages from the Gospel?"

"Yes, daughter, I do remember that her words were very full of consolation to my sorrowing heart."

"Yes, mother, I know they were. Now, if I could go and read the same passages to Mrs. Malvers—"

"Now, my child, do be still, or you will break my heart. Mrs. Bridd is a good Christian, and she will take better care of Mrs. Malvers than you could do."

Sad, sad mistake!

Mrs. Bridd was a good Christian, and a very active one, too; but she was human, and could not do everything. She was too busily engaged at that time, in preparing to have the boys decently interred, and in attending to Mrs. Malvers' bodily wants, to have a moment of time to spend in administering to her spiritual comfort. Even if she had thought of it, she would not have presumed to have offered to read aloud to Mrs. Malvers. She instinctively felt that Minnie's education was far superior to her own, and therefore she would have been ashamed to read aloud to her in the stammering, blundering way in which only she could read. Her education, in early life, had been very limited.

When she left Mrs. Sansonn, she walked very rapidly to the house of Minnie's other lady employer. In her family, Mrs. Bridd was unknown; still, she ventured to call and make known her errand. Not being accustomed to the ways of the house or its entrances, she was obliged to ring the front door-bell.

When the same tedious explanations had been made to Biddy, Mrs. Naylore's servant, Mrs. Bridd added the statement of Mrs. Sansonn's having given her a bank-note to help pay the expenses of the funeral.

Biddy then left Mrs. Bridd standing in the vestibule, fastened the hall door, and proceeded up-stairs with her message. Mrs. Naylore was busily engaged in preparing to pay an evening visit, and was not pleased at the interruption. But Minnie was a favorite with Biddy, and she persevered most firmly in her efforts to prevail on her lady to aid the funeral fund.

"But who is this Mrs. Bridd, who comes here in the name of Mrs. Malvers? Do you know her?"

"No ma'am, I do not; I never saw her before; but I know she must be honest, by her looks; and besides that, she showed me the bank-note that Mrs. Sansonn gave her for the same object, but it is not enough to pay all the charges of the undertaker."

"Well, Biddy, if Mrs. Malvers' boys are really dead, and she is too poor to bury them decently, of course it is my duty to aid her. Send Sallie over to see Mrs. Sansonn and ask her if she knows this Mrs. Bridd, and if she did give her a bank-note."

Sallie went, saw Mrs. Sansonn, and returned with a favorable report. Then, Mrs. Naylore gave Biddy a very liberal donation for the funeral.

All this time, Mrs. Bridd was left standing in the locked vestibule. She could not enter farther in the house, because the hall door was fastened on the inside. She could not open the street door, on account of its numerous locks, bolts, bars and brass chains which encased it, defying her knowledge of locksmithcraft; she tried several times, but could not succeed in opening it. She was very tired; but the vestibule was unfurnished, paved with slabs of brightly polished marble; she dared not sit on it, fearing, if she did, her black dress would soil it. She concluded that Biddy had forgotten she was there, and that she would be kept a prisoner until some caller would ring the front door-bell. Not a very pleasant anticipation, hurried as she was, with so many things meanwhile being neglected.

By the time Biddy delivered Mrs. Sansonn's money and dismissed her, it was a quarter before eight o'clock. Mrs. Bridd greatly wondered how she could accomplish all her wishes between then and midnight. All this time Minnie was

alone with the children, who were too young to know how to comfort her. Two women were keeping watch over the dead, below stairs; but to Minnie there was neither consolation nor words of peace offered. Had some one then read to her the words of life written in the Scriptures, how like the voices of angels they would have seemed!

Meanwhile, Mrs. Bridd hurried to the house of her own pastor, who furnished her with the money she still required, from a fund which he held in trust for similar cases. He also promised to officiate at the funeral of the drowned boys, on the afternoon of the following day.

She then went to the office of the undertaker, and gave him orders about the funeral. She requested him to cut out the shrouds, explain to her how they were to be made, and informed him that she would dispense with the customary services of his female attendant, by making the shrouds herself, that night.

He agreed to call at Minnie's house at nine o'clock in the morning, with a double coffin.

Mrs. Bridd then went home, gave sundry directions to her son, then went to Minnie's to spend the night. She found her still weeping, and her children around her in darkness and hunger.

She gave them their supper, after which they were very soon asleep. Mrs. Bridd then began making the shrouds, at which she was assisted by two other female neighbors, who also offered to remain with her during the night. At half-past eleven, the shrouds were finished.

The three women then put the room in order, seated themselves near the front window, and talked over the arrangements of the funeral, until the public clock in the neighborhood struck a loud peal on its great iron bell; another, and another peal followed it, until twelve loud strokes of the "iron tongue of time" told the hour of midnight—the close of the last day of the week; another day, another week, then began its solemn, still, onward march, towards an endless eternity.

The strokes were sounded upon the quiet midnight air with almost fearful distinctness; so loud, so shrill, so piercing, they seemed, in the silence so universally reigning over all else in the vicinity, that Mrs. Bridd feared they must have aroused Minnie from her slumber. She went up-stairs to see, and found her wide awake, and weeping very bitterly. Her babe also needed attentions which she had not strength to bestow on it.

Mrs Bridd warmed some milk for it over the lamp. After feeding it she sat on a rocking chair in the bed-room, and rocked and sang it to sleep, as she softly murmured the words of the old times nursery ditty of Dr. Watts, called the

CRADLE HYMN.

Hush, my dear, lie still and slumber,
Holy angels guard thy bed;
Heavenly blessings, without number,
Gently falling on thy head.

Sleep, my babe, thy food and raiment,
House and home, thy friends provide,
All without thy care or payment,
All thy wants are well supplied.

How much better thou'rt attended,
Than the Son of God could be,
When from heaven he descended,
And became a child like thee.

Soft and easy is thy cradle,
Coarse and hard thy Saviour lay,
When his birth-place was a stable,
And his softest bed was hay.

Blessed babe! what glorious features—
Spotless, fair, divinely bright!
Must he dwell with brutal creatures?
How could angels bear the sight?

Was there nothing but a manger
Fallen sinners could afford,
To receive the Heavenly Stranger?
Did they thus affront their Lord?

Soft, my child, I did not chide thee,
Tho' my song may sound too hard;
'Tis thy mother sits beside thee,
And her arms shall be thy guard.

Yet, to read the shameful story,
How the Jews abused their King;
How they served the Lord of Glory,
Makes me tremble while I sing.

See the kinder shepherds round Him,
Telling wonders from the sky;
There they sought Him, there they found Him,
With His Virgin Mother by.

See the lovely Babe a dressing;
Lovely Infant, how He smiled!
When He wept, the mother's blessing
Soothed and hushed the Holy Child.

Lo! He slumbers in His manger,
Where the horned oxen fed;
Peace, my darling, here's no danger,
There are no oxen near thy bed.

'Twas to save thee, child, from dying—
Save my dear from burning flame,
Bitter groans and endless crying—
That thy blest Redeemer came.

May'st thou live to know and fear Him,
Trust and love him all thy days;
Then go dwell for ever near Him,
See His face, and sing His praise.

I could give thee thousand kisses,
Hoping what I most desire;
Not a mother's fondest wishes
Can to greater joys aspire.

The gentle, soothing words of the cradle ditty, lulled both mother and child; and, finding they were asleep, Mrs. Bridd silently placed the babe on the bed, then went down stairs to keep watch over the dead.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VOW—THE COURT FUNERAL.

One o'clock struck, but it did not arouse the sleepers; neither did it bring home the absent husband and father. Two o'clock was chimed by the great bell of the hall. Soon after its echoes had died away on the "stilly night" air, the anxious watchers heard, coming up the court, a heavy, staggering, unsteady step. They suspected whose it was, and they awaited its nearer approach with trembling fearfulness. They set the front door wide open, so that he need not have to knock or make a noise in opening it.

Merton Malvers staggered into the room, so much under the influence of ruthless old King Alcohol, that they wondered how he could have found his way home. When he entered, he did

not seem to see or notice anything before him; his eyes were more than half closed; he staggered towards the staircase, and tried to ascend it, but the effort was beyond his ability. Although, in common with the baser sort who love strong drink, he did not like water, but was like water, in his propensity of finding a level; so, that instead of ascending the stairs, he fell on the floor, near them, and there he remained, as still as a log—as still as the "worm of the still" could make him. He slept in the same place and position until a late hour of the next day. His arrival and fall did not disturb his wife; she continued to sleep until day-dawn. At the return of the morning's bright sun-rays, she awoke to a full sense of her sorrowful miseries. The first words she uttered were the names of her drowned sons.

"Charlie, Harry! O, my sons, my darlings! how can I live without you?"

In a moment, Mrs. Bridd was at her side, and she told her that her husband was asleep, on the floor of the lower room. This information made her suddenly very quiet; and she begged Mrs. Bridd to try to keep the house very still; for, said she—

"If he sleep undisturbed, long enough, he

will awaken sober, and act properly; but if his sleep be broken while still under the influence of liquor, he will be ungovernable, and will probably leave the house for a long time—perhaps for weeks or months."

By this time Olimond and Isabel came from the upper room; soon afterwards, numerous other bare little feet came softly down the stairs, until all the children were again in their mother's room.

She endeavored to arise, intending to give them their breakfast; but her head reeled, and she was obliged to replace it on her pillow.

"There, now!" said Mrs. Bridd, "you see you are too weak to get up. Lie still, and I will give them their breakfast, and then bring up yours; after you have eaten it you will feel better."

When the children were done eating, they returned up-stairs, where they remained until dinner time.

After Mrs. Bridd put Minnie's room in order, and attended to the wants of the babe, she went to her own house, where she prepared a very nice little breakfast for Minnie; it had been a long while since she had seen as nicely a prepared one brought to her bedside.

She sat up in bed and reviewed the tempting arrray it presented to her eyes, with many grateful feelings towards her kind neighbor, and in her mourning, sorrowing heart, she blessed her for her many considerate attentions. She tried to feel very much pleased, and said—

"Dear, good Mrs. Bridd, you have brought me a breakfast that is fit to be placed before a queen."

Then she made an effort to eat; but as she did so, a remembrance flashed with cutting sharpness through her mind—a lump heavy as lead, hard as iron—suddenly choked up her throat; and ah! there was no room there for food, however nicely and kindly it was prepared. After making several ineffectual attempts to speak, she at last sobbed out—

"This is Sunday morning, is it not?"

"Yes, dear, it is," said Mrs. Bridd; "and you can take your own time to eat your breakfast; there is no work to be done to-day."

"O, Mrs. Bridd, I was not thinking of my work. But last Sunday morning I was not well; I had been worried more than usual the day before; I had coughed nearly all night, and could not get up as usual on Sunday morning. And O, Mrs. Bridd, how can I bear my dreadful

loss? Then, my two darling boys took such good care of my other children, gave them their breakfast, and when they were all quieted, dear Charlie and Harry both stood where you are standing now, with my breakfast in their hands, and said, so lovingly—

"'Here, mammy-baby, here are your two good old nurses; we have—have brought you up some nice, hot breakfast, and we say you must eat it, or we will call you our naughty mammy-baby.'"

"O, O! how little I thought it was the last time! and now, to know that I will never, never see them again."

"Eat your breakfast, now, my dear lady, and after a little while I will take you down stairs to see them; yes, you shall see them again, and you shall see, too, how nicely I have fixed them up for you."

"O, Mrs. Bridd, you do everything so nicely! How could I do without you?"

"If you wish to prove what you say, let me see you eat. I will not believe you unless you do."

"I will force myself to eat for your sake."

After Minnie had finished her breakfast, and the tray was removed, Mrs. Bridd busied her-

self in various ways about the room and bed, and did all she could think of to divert Minnie's mind, until after the undertaker had come and put the bodies in their coffin.

When he had taken his departure, she went down to see how they looked. She found, that though the coffin was only pine, it was stained so skilfully and varnished so brightly, that, to her unpractised eye, it looked as well as the best mahogany she ever saw. The shrouds were neatly fitting; the hair of the silent sleepers was smoothly brushed; their hands and arms were united in a last fraternal embrace. She decked their bosoms with small clusters of bright, green leaves of rose-geranium, from a plant growing in her own window; and then she thought, as they lay in their purity of white, spotless flannel, and hopeful green leaves, they formed a beautiful object, fit to be gazed upon very fondly. She then returned to Mrs. Malvers, and conducted her down stairs to see them.

Very silently they stepped along, so as not to awaken Merton, who still slept on the floor.

The mother seeing them—the drowned boys—looking so calm and lovely, in what seemed to be a peaceful, happy sleep; then as her eyes wandered to the sight of her husband's bloated,

distorted face, and his poison-defiled features, the contrast between their apparent serenity, and his frightful deformities, was very striking—impressive. After looking at them awhile in silence, she whispered to Mrs. Bridd—

"O, look at them, and look at their father! If they had lived to be as old as he is, who knows but they might have become as he is?"

"You see, then, my dear," said Mrs. Bridd, "how true it is, that God knows what is best for us poor sinners. You would certainly rather see them as they are, than as he is."

"O, yes, yes! a thousand times rather. I will now try not to grieve any more over their early loss. You may close the coffin until this afternoon, and then I will look at them once more.

The two women then returned to the middle room, and spent the remaining hours of the morning in talking over the trials and sorrows of their past lives.

Minnie dwelt at large upon the sad event, which she always blamed for Merton's fall into intemperately dissipated habits; and in telling about it, she was obliged to recount all the circumstances of her birth and parentage, as far as she knew them. She told it all apologetically,

to shield Merton as much as she possibly could from the ill opinion of Mrs. Bridd. She was anxious he should stand, in her eyes, on the best footing on which she could place him. Minnie felt so grateful to good Mrs. Bridd for her many acts of kindness and assistance in her present sore affliction, that she thought she ought to manifest her gratitude by placing in her a full and unreserved confidence.

Mrs. Bridd was much interested in the account, and repaid Minnie for it by telling some of her own past domestic bereavements. She was an orphan; she was poor, and used to hard work all the days of her life. Her husband had been a laborer in a brick-yard; he was steady, frugal, and very industrious. He was promoted to be a regular moulder and burner of bricks; then he was made boss or foreman of a large brick-making establishment. He was well prospered; and by saving up his honest earnings, he, in a few years, bought a house and lot. Afterwards, he was taken sick, of typhus fever, from the effects of which he died.

Soon after his death, another person brought claims against his property, and commenced a suit in court to recover it from her. It then appeared that Mr. Bridd had been imposed on by

the person of whom he had purchased his property, and that his title was not good.

She was turned out of the house, with three young children to support. She picked up for them a precarious living, in various kinds of illy paid for labor, until they were aged six, eight and ten years. At that time they were seized with scarlet fever, and all three died within the same week.

When her husband died, she had bought a burying lot in Monument Cemetery, and there she buried her three children.

George, she said, was not her own son, but an adopted one, whom she was raising as her own.

As the two women talked together of their past bereavements, and of their present trials, they took little notice of the flight of time, as it passed on in its ceaseless progress. It tarried not to listen to their lowly whispered tales of sorrow.

The hours, meanwhile, flew quickly and unheeded past them. Presently, the troop of Minnie's young children came peeping into the room, looking wistfully towards their mother's pale, sad face.

She looked at them, then understanding well the nature and import of their errand, said :—

"O, my! its that time of day, is it? You are getting hungry, and beginning to feel the want of your dinner, are you, children?"

"Yes ma'am," they answered, in a whisper.

"Then, I must go down stairs and make you a cup of coffee."

"No, you shall not, this day," said Mrs. Bridd; "don't trouble yourself about their dinner; it is too soon, yet, for dinner; but, come in here, now, all of you, and stay with your mother until I bring you in something nice, that George cooked for you last night while I was in here attending to your baby. Now, be very quiet; I will come as soon as I can. Then we will all eat our dinners together, here in mother's room.

Mrs. Bridd then went down stairs, and found Merton arousing from his long sleep. She took a seat near him, and said:—

"Mr. Malvers, a very great misfortune came to you yesterday, and you are still ignorant of it. It is a sad, sad loss, and one that will never, never be recovered by you."

He stared at her in mute bewilderment, and gasped, as he said—

"What! is—is my wife dead?"

"No, not your wife; she is not dead yet, but

others are. Don't you see that double coffin there, in that corner?"

Merton walked towards it and lifted the lid, gazed wildly upon the faces of his sons, then said—

"O, neighbor! when did this happen?"

"Yesterday."

"How? when? where?"

"At Fairmount. The how and why it happened, is because your two noble boys wanted to do what you ought to do."

"What was it they wanted to do?"

"Earn money, to prevent their mother going out washing and ironing, to support you and your children, while you drink away all your earnings, and thus force her to that hard work."

Merton was sober enough then, and wide awake too; the astonishment he felt, blunted his feelings about the death of his boys, and the woman near him began to fear he was so hardened in sin, as not to care for their death. He gazed at her mutely, a few moments, then said—

"You dont, surely, mean that my wife—my Minnie—goes out washing?"

"Tell me, sir, how do you suppose your wife and children live?"

"How do they live?" repeated Merton.

"Yes; how do you think their living is procured? You do not want them to steal or beg, do you?"

"O, no, no, no! I thought I gave them money enough to live on."

"You? Why, sir, you have never given them enough to pay one month's rent since they have lived in this house."

"And has my wife earned the rent by washing?"

"Yes; and in trying to prevent her suffering such a hardship, these noble-minded boys went to the Schuylkill to catch fish to sell, and give their money to her. Why, sir, you have as good as drowned these boys, in the bad liquor with which you are very fast drowning your own soul, and you are also hurrying your poor, delicate wife to an untimely grave."

"O, my sons, my sons! my poor sons!"

Thus sobbed the miserable father, as he leaned over them, and kissed their clay-cold faces.

Mrs. Bridd seeing him at last aroused to a natural state of feeling, and hoping that it might have a good influence on his future conduct, left him "alone with the dead."

Very soon she was busy in preparing a mid-

day meal for the bereaved family. She made a large pot full of coffee. While it was boiling, she sliced some bread and butter, and a large piece of cold, boiled, corned beef, the cooking of which beef George had superintended the previous evening, while he, at the same time, studied his Sunday-school lessons.

As Merton leaned there alone, over the coffin of his drowned boys, he vowed, in the bitterness of his anguish, that he would never again drink one drop of liquor.

Ah! but he had often before made the same vow; always made, only to be broken.

After the dinner was removed, one of the male residents of the court came in to see Mrs. Bridd, and said—

"How many carriages hev ye hired for this fun'ral?"

"Only two."

"Only two?"

"Yes; we could not afford to hire more."

"Ah, I was fearin' ye wouldn't! Have you engaged a hearse?"

"No; the coffin must go in one of the carriages."

"A fun'ral of two carriages, and no hearse, out of our coort, and that, too, on a Sunday!

"Why, Mrs. Bridd, it would be a disgrace to the hale coort."

"I know, John, it will be shameful, but we are very poor and cannot help it."

"If you can't, I will try and see what I can do to hilp it."

The man then went among his acquaintances, and begged money enough to hire a hearse and four more carriages. Thus, it was among these short-pursed but open-hearted courtiers—they were more willing, for the honor of their "coort" on a Sunday—to help bury the dead decently, than were some of their rich neighbors in the goodly city of Brotherly Love.

Mrs. Bridd then busied herself in preparing the children as neatly as she could for the occasion. It was impossible to procure suitable clothing for them all; but she did the best she could towards making them look decent; and that best was, verily, poor enough. She borrowed a suit of black clothes and a good hat for Merton; it happened he had a pair of good boots. She also borrowed a black dress and bonnet for Minnie. A shawl she procured from her own home.

If Mrs. or Miss Sansonn had been there, as the preparations for that simple funeral were

progressing, they would have seen many ways in which their aid would have been very useful. A few dollars of their abundance, judiciously given in that time of need, would have been at once a blessing and a relief to Minnie and Mrs. Bridd.

At six o'clock they were all ready to start. The parents, brothers, sisters and a few humble neighbors had taken their last leave of the beautiful dead.

The double coffin lid was screwed over all that was mortal of Charlie and Harry Malvers. Then, in a little while, the funeral procession slowly proceeded down the street; through several broad avenues, over which the solemn stillness of the Sabbath day's silence calmly presided. Then they entered the wide thoroughfare known as Broad street; no sooner had they turned the corner into it, than they, strangely enough, seemed to have left behind them all the stillness of holy time. The road was filled with vehicles, drawn by spirited horses, that flashed and dashed past each other as if they, or their drivers, had entirely forgotten, or more probably, had never learned the meaning of the fourth commandment. Many groups of pedestrians crowded the side-

walks—some entering, others going from the city.

They presented an animated, cheerful scene; but to the mourning hearts, following that double coffined hearse, the view, lively as it was, appeared only to make the darkness of their own sorrow all the harder to bear, when brought into contrast with it.

The sky was brilliantly blue; the bright Summer's sun-rays gilded housetops, trees, hedges, fences. The same Summer's sun-rays sent up a blaze of illumined glory over and among the light, fleecy clouds that were beginning to cluster in the Western sky, as if Dame Nature was there preparing a couch of gorgeously tinted plumes, on which might repose her favorite son, as he retired, in splendid magnificence, to his nocturnal rest.

Could Minnie and Merton have looked upon that etherael glory, and have seen in it a type of the eternal splendors of the abode of their Creator, they could, through faith, have enjoyed the majesty and infallible love which He ever manifests towards all those who seek Him, and who desire to find Him; then they would not have felt as utterly wretched and hopeless as they did. But they did not even think of Him.

How strange, how unaccountably strange it is, that reason-gifted, soul-endowed, immortal beings should look upon the works of God, in his creation, and fail to remember, love and honor Him as their Omnipotent Benefactor!

When the funeral procession reached the cemetery, it wound its way through several broad, gravelled roads, passed many beautiful groups and rows of shady, green trees. The woodbines and the roses were in full bloom, and as they hung, in rich abundance, over the railings of the family lots, their sweet perfume filled the air with lovely fragrance. Birds fluttered, twittered, sang and sprang about and among the branches of the trees. All Nature seemed to be trying very hard to make this earth as beautiful as it could be made, while occupied, as it is, by sinful and thankless mankind.

The funeral ceremonies over the grave were very soon concluded. Then the minister led the way back to the carriages, and the precious dead, still uncovered by the "clods of the valley," were left to the care of hired and unknown grave-yard laborers. This moving away from the grave, while it was still unfilled, was a sore trial to the bereaved mother. It was so differ-

ent from the country custom she was used to, that it seemed to her almost a cruel and unnatural desertion of her darling sons; but such is the tyranny of custom; no matter what her feelings were, she was torn forcibly away from the still yawning grave. Had she resisted the force against her more than she did, she would have been looked upon as one bereft of her reason, and would have been all the more powerfully forced from it.

After their return to the court, every one went quietly to his or her own home, except Mrs. Bridd; she spent the rest of the evening with Minnie and Merton Malvers.

George Bridd prepared and ate his evening meal in solitude, then went to church alone.

After Minnie had taken her supper, Mrs. Bridd delivered to her Mrs. Sansonn's message, about fulfilling, at her house, her usual Monday morning engagement, and concluded it by asking—

"Do you think you will be able to go to-morrow?"

"O, yes, Mrs. Bridd! I must be able, whether I feel so or not. If my husband could be depended on, I would not have to go; but I know him too well to trust the solemn promises he

has made to-day, never to drink again. Next week our rent must be paid; it will be hard enough to raise the required money even if I do keep my appointments; without keeping them, it would be impossible. I will have to trust the care of the house and younger children to Olimond and Isabel; I know I will feel very uneasy about them; but there is no remedy for it, I must go."

"Well, my dear Mrs. Malvers, if you can, I dare say it will not hurt you more than it would to stay at home all day; but you need not be uneasy about your house or children; I will be at home to-morrow, until four o'clock in the afternoon, and I will have a care over them. No doubt they will get along very nicely."

"We will have to make the experiment, at any rate, and see how it will answer."

"Olimond seems to be a very steady, quiet boy, for his age," said Mrs. Bridd.

"Yes, he is quiet enough, but he has his faults; he is fond of teazing the other children, and I am afraid there will not be much peace among them while I am away."

The next morning, Merton Malvers awoke from his slumbers, with the resolution in his heart to become a sober and a better man. He

ate his breakfast as usual, in silence, and seemed to have forgotten all about what Mrs. Bridd had told him respecting Minnie's having to go out to wash and iron for the support of the family.

At a quarter before six he prepared, hod in hand, to go to his work. His wife then handed him his dinner-basket, and he left the house. Had he been in the "wild woods," or on some lonely prairie, where he would have been free from temptation, he would, perhaps, have been able to carry into execution the laudable resolution with which he hailed the dawning light of that beautiful Monday morning. But the means of breaking his resolution were within his reach, and he could not resist the temptation to possess them. The remembrance of his dead boys, instead of being a lesson to warn him from further indulgence in the habits which brought in their train so many fruits of sorrowful bitterness, seemed only to strengthen and add fresh vigor to the clamors of the demon of the still, which within gnawed upon his vitals, and with irresistible demand, ceased not saying, as it clamored and as it gnawed—

"More drink! more drink!"

It clamored, it gnawed, and it demanded, until, in its fury, it made him forget or dis-

regard the resolution with which he had begun the day.

By the time he reached the door of the groggery, situated near his working-place, he found that he was completely under its control; that its power over him was strong as chains of adamant, and that his resolution was weaker than a cobweb. But he was destitute of the means of procuring a single glass. His last week's earnings had all disappeared. He had either spent or lost them on Saturday night; he could not tell which way they went, neither did he care much; all he did care for, was to know that his pockets were empty, and that he was in want of his customary morning drink. He was not long in a state of perplexity on the subject. He had, quite recently, bought himself a pair of good boots; these he offered at the bar of the tavern for liquor.

The offer was accepted; he thus proved to himself how much his wife could depend on him or his resolutions for the means of living.

Thus he progressed, from one degree of hard-heartedness to another, until he was lost to every sense of feeling, except the one ever abiding feeling of unquenchable thirst.

Ah! but was not his a bitter and a lamentable

bondage to wily and mighty old King Alcohol? And yet—O, my soul! there was a time when that tyrant's hold on him was as light and as powerless as it is even now on thee.

See to it, then, that thou let him not tighten his grasp on thee; and remember that the only security against his allurements is the resolution to

"Touch not, taste not the unclean thing,"

the use of which had reduced Merton Malvers to the miserable condition of bartering his boots from his feet, for the liquid fire which was destroying his soul and body, not only for all time, but—how solemn the thought—for the countless ages of all eternity.

CHAPTER XX.

OTHER SAD CHANGES.

While Merton Malvers stood in the tavern, bartering away his good boots for bad liquor, his wife busied herself very hurriedly through her morning duties, then gave oft-repeated directions to Olimond and Isabel about managing

the other children and preparing their dinner. All these things being done, she hastened away, as fast as her feeble frame would permit her, towards the house of her employer.

So filled was her maternal mind with the unavoidable cares and anxieties for the safety of her living children, that there was little room in it for regrets and vain thoughts about the dear ones that were lost and buried.

Yet, deep, deep down in the secret recesses of her broken heart, there was a keen pang—a void, an aching void—which would have its way, unbanished and unfilled by any of the conflicting, superficial calls of duty, and the stern, unfeeling demands of dire necessity. That same necessity compelled her to work, toil and labor, no matter how much her heart ached the while.

Mrs. Sansonn's cook was very kind to her; even more so than usual that morning; she had waiting for her a very nice, hot breakfast, which she insisted she must eat, before she should see the sight of a washtub. Mrs. and Miss Sansonn thought of Minnie, early in the morning, and they both intended to go to her and inquire after her welfare, as soon as they could command a few moments of leisure. But those

moments of leisure did not visit them that day. They were very busy with their preparations for leaving home, and as the hours of the day progressed, they did not find time even to think about her.

When Tuesday's ironing was accomplished, and Minnie was preparing to go home, Essie paid her the two days' wages, and then said—

"The family is going out of town, to-morrow, to be gone two months; but the house is to be kept open, and you are to come as usual to do the work, as they will send their things here by the railroad, to be washed and ironed."

This unexpected information was quite a relief, as she feared she was to lose her employment at Mrs. Sansonn's. Mrs. Naylore managed differently. She dismissed all her servants, and shut up her house; but, fortunately, she chose to entrust to Minnie the care of the keys of the house, and a direction to open and air it once a week, for which service she was to receive one dollar and fifty cents per week. So that Minnie fared much better than do hundreds of other poor people, who, in Philadelphia, are every Summer thrown out of employment by their rich patrons going out of town, to remain away until Fall. Yet, the same rich patrons are very

often unreasonable enough to murmur against the improvidence of the poor, because they do not save a sufficiency during the Summer to supply their necessities through the next Winter, while the facts of their Summer's experience, prove that they can scarcely earn enough to keep them from actual starvation. This Summer—Minnie's first Summer in the city—passed away, to her, very slowly; the aching in her heart gave leaden ballast to the wings of Time, and he seemed to drag over her very drearily. She often sighed, with ardent wishes, to breathe once more the pure, fresh air of the open country. The close atmosphere of the narrow court stifled her. She desired very much to walk to the cemetery, to visit the grave of her buried Charlie and Harry. Though her youngest child was beginning to walk about the house, he was not able to walk all the way to the cemetery, and she was not able to carry him. She did not wish to leave him with Olimond and Isabel more than she could help. They did not get along very peaceably together. Almost every time she came home from her work, there were some bitter complaints from one or the other of these two children. The whole Summer passed away, and she did not visit the grave.

On Saturday afternoons she used to take her children and her needle work, and spend a few hours in one of the public squares of the city; there she watched them as they played and ran about on the gravel walks. May Heaven's richest blessings ever rest upon the memory of those who planned, arranged and secured open, public squares in large cities! And may the reverse ever follow those who would presume to curtail their number or their space!

These Saturday afternoon rambles, in the open squares, were the only pleasures or recreations with which she or her children were ever favored.

The remainder of their time, during the whole week, was spent in the warm and sultry court. On Sundays they never went out, because they could never afford to buy suitable clothing. How much Minnie wished, during those long, Summer Sundays, for the company of her two buried sons. They were always so bright and cheerful, so obedient, so thoughtful in all their little ways and habits, that they had ever been as bright sunbeams, shining through the mist of her domestic trials. As she thought of them and their untimely, early end, she found it very hard to cease mourning over their sudden loss.

Her husband did not mend his habits, but, as usual, in all similar cases, he rapidly proceeded from worse to worse. Thus the Summer wore away, and the cold, short days of dreary old Winter returned, to purify, with their keen, searching blasts, the atmosphere, and to chill, benumb and congeal the inhabitants of the crowded city. The dwellers of the court were once more glad to huddle together, around their tiny stoves, in their small, narrow apartments.

The Winter was a dull one, and even Mrs. Bridd found she had great difficulty in keeping herself and only one child supplied with the necessaries of life. Yet she managed to attend church, and to send George to Sunday school; but he was, at last, sadly in want of a cloth cap and a pair of new shoes. Two or three Sundays passed away, without her being able to procure them. On these Sundays, George made his appearance in school, with his toes peeping intrusively from between the soles and uppers of his shoes. Some how, the same neatly stockinged toes would not stay within the decent space into which he tried hard to cramp them; the same toes were very obstinate, and would persist in peeping out. His cap, too, was full of holes; Mrs. Bridd had mended and

mended them, until the rents would not stay mended any longer; but that did not matter so much, as George could and did stow his cap away in his pocket during school and church time. At last, his teacher noticed his troubles, and spoke of them to his sister, who belonged to a Dorcas society, and between them, they obtained a new cloth cap and a pair of new shoes for Master George Bridd.

The teacher carried them to him on Saturday evening, and asked him—

"How do you like them, my son?"

"O, very much, indeed, sir! and I am sure I do thank you a thousand times for them."

Just then, a bright thought seemed to strike the fancy of the grateful boy. He looked as if he wanted to say something to his teacher, but was too timid to speak it out freely. At last Mrs. Bridd noticed the difficulty under which he seemed to be laboring, and she said to him—

"What is it, George, you are thinking of now, my boy? 'tis something more than common, I know, by the twinkle in your bright, black eyes."

"Yes, mother, I am thinking of something quite uncommon, and I wonder why I never thought of it before."

"Well, speak out, and let us hear what it is."

"I am afraid my teacher will think I am very troublesome, if I do."

"Do not think so badly as that of me, my dear George. I do not think you can be troublesome to me, unless you will refuse to tell me this uncommon secret. Have I not often told you not to be afraid to speak freely to me?"

"Yes, sir, very often."

"Then, why don't you now?"

"I was, sir, thinking if you could give my neighbor, Olimond Malvers, a cap and a pair of new shoes, like these you have given me, I could bring him to school to-morrow; for his mother has just finished a suit of clothes for him, that she has pieced together out of those of his two dead brothers. But he has neither cap nor shoes, and she cannot buy any, because she is too poor. I would like to have him go with me very much, sir. He is as old as I am, and has never been inside of any kind of a school."

"Do you think, George, he would come to school if he had them?"

"Yes, sir, I am sure he would; because he is very sorry he cannot go with me, and he wants to learn very much; indeed he does."

"Where does he live?"

"Right opposite to us, in this court."

The teacher then asked several other questions about Olimond Malvers, at the end of which he took a narrow strip of paper from his pocket, and told George to take the measure of Olimond's head and foot.

About an hour afterwards, the teacher, guided by the delighted George, walked into Minnie's house, and presented Olimond the new shoes and cap, on condition he would attend Sunday school with George.

Two families were rendered happy by those simple little presents. Olimond attended Sunday school a few years, but he did not learn as fast as George did. With George, to study was the delight of his life, and he was never contented away from his books.

About the middle of the Winter, Olimond and Isabel disagreed so much, and annoyed their mother so frequently by their violent quarrels, that she, at last, felt afraid to leave them together in the house during her forced absence from it. She therefore resolved to send Olimond to week-day school, to keep him away from home.

She went to the nearest public school, to have his name entered as a candidate for a seat.

The teacher told her that she would put his name on the list, but she did not believe she could make room to receive him before the Spring.

Mrs. Malvers was then greatly perplexed, and did not know how to manage. As usual, she appealed to Mrs. Bridd for advice, and that kind neighbor said—

"Yes, that is always the way with these public schools; they are so full of rich people's children, that poor people's are crowded out."

"What shall I do with him?"

"He is a big boy for his age, and very steady."

"O, yes, he is all that."

"He can read a little, can he not?"

"Yes."

"I suppose he can read enough to make out the words on the signs and finger-boards on the streets?"

"Yes, Mrs. Bridd, he can read that much very well; you know, George has been teaching him all Winter."

"George is a good boy. He knows his figures, too, does he not?"

"Yes, pretty well; thanks, too, for that to George."

"I think he will answer. As I was coming

up the street this morning, I read, in a shop window, 'A boy wanted.' Now, if it is only an errand boy they want, I don't see why our Olimond would not suit them as well as many another boy, who might be older, but not half as steady. Suppose we go down together and see about it."

"Had we not," said Mrs. Malvers, "better take him with us?"

"Yes; tell him to be very clean, and to behave his prettiest."

They all went down the street together, and finally, the result of their triple visit was, that Olimond was hired at a dollar a week, to be errand boy in the front ware-room of a large fancy tin-ware manufactory. He there behaved himself very steadily, and gave his employers very good evidence of his usefulness.

A few weeks after that, another sad bereavement befell the domestic circle of our unfortunate Minnie. While she was away from home, washing at Mrs. Sansonn's, the clothes of her youngest child caught fire. Isabel and the other children became so much frightened, that instead of trying to extinguish the flames of the burning raiment, they opened the front door, and ran, screaming for help, into the court.

By the time the neighbors reached the suffering infant, it was so badly burned, that it died that night. This sad misfortune so worked on Minnie's feelings that she was sick—too sick to leave her bed for several days. The remains of the burned child were deposited in the same grave with its brothers. They were interred without much ceremony, and as quietly as possible. Mrs. Malvers did not follow them to the ground. She was too ill to leave her bed.

Mrs. Sansonn and Mrs. Naylore, through Mrs. Bridd, defrayed the very moderate expenses of the humble funeral. They also sent a physician to attend Minnie. He told them she must have perfect rest a few weeks, or she would sink under the weight of her accumulated afflictions and fatigues of mind and body.

These two ladies then, for the first time, visited Minnie. They took quite a fancy to Isabel, who was a bright looking child. They told her mother they had a friend who wanted to hire a little girl, and they thought that Isabel would suit her very well.

After talking over the subject a few days, Isabel went to live at her first place. The lady, Mrs. Loons, liked her very well, and she

liked the lady, so that they went on together very comfortably.

Minnie did not recover sufficient strength all that winter to be able to go out to wash and iron. Merton had been absent from home a whole week before the death of the babe, and he did not return until four weeks after it. When he did come home, he was too much under the influence of alcohol to miss either it or Isabel. The day after his return he was sober, and then asked for them.

When told where they both were, he sullenly said, for all he could see, there were enough of the crowd left yet.

Minnie remained very feeble nearly all the time. Now it was that her long hidden jewelry, piece by piece, went into the hands of different dealers, to keep her little ones from starvation.

Olimond's earnings did not more than keep him in shoes and clothes. Isabel, also, earned only her own keeping. Neighbors were kind, and often sent her a loaf of bread, a drawing of tea, or some other article of food, that helped her very nicely. Mrs. Sansonn sent her a load of coal, and Mrs. Naylore paid her medicine bills. But all these aids and many acts of kindness, so opportunely and acceptably bestowed,

though they prevented her and her children from suffering with cold and hunger, would not pay her month's rent. That had to be given in ready cash, and very hard it was to get it together in time. Here, again, her highly prized jewels were applied to for relief. But, being sold, as they were, at an immense sacrifice, they did not last long.

As Spring opened, Minnie again rallied; her strength returned enough to work about her own home, but she was not able to go out to wash. Mrs. Sansonn and Mrs. Naylore then interested themselves for her among their friends, with so much success, that they procured plain needle work for her from several families. At this work she made out to keep her family from actual suffering, and also to pay her rent.

Again the Summer rolled over the city, with its heated air, and its burning rays of a cloudless sun. And here her supply of needle work was lessened almost to nothing, because her customers were nearly all out of town. She then procured some washing and ironing to be done at her own home. This work secured her the means of procuring food, but it did not suffice to pay the rent. She was now unable to collect

any money for that purpose; all she earned was swallowed in the support of the table. When the landlord called, on the first day of August, she had not one single dollar to give him. He was very much out of patience with her, and said if she did not pay him before the end of the next week, he would put her goods out of the house. Minnie was in great distress when she heard him make that threat.

CHAPTER XXI.

A KIND PHYSICIAN.

The end of the next week came, and she had not the money to pay the landlord's bill. Finding she could not pay it, he sent a constable, who put her goods on the court pavement, bolted and locked the house very securely, put the keys in his pocket, and walked away.

When Mrs. Bridd came home from her early morning walk, she found them all there—children, mother and furniture—huddled together in a heap of sorrowful confusion. She was so much out of patience with the landlord, who

also owned her house, that she vowed she would not live another day in one of his dwellings. She then said to Minnie—

"Mrs. Malvers, as I was coming along Eighteenth street, past Pearl, I saw a house to let in Pearl street. If you will live with me in the two third story rooms, you may have them for two dollars per month, and we will all move out of this narrow, warm court. Biddy Magoony is to be married on next Sunday, and she will take the two rooms on the second floor."

Minnie was very glad to find a place of refuge so easily. Mrs. Bridd at once rented the house in Pearl street, which, fortunately, did not need cleaning. When the month after their removal came to a close, the two dollars due from Minnie were not come-at-able. Fifty cents was all the cash she could command. She gave it to Mrs. Bridd, who said, very good naturedly—

"Well, never mind this time; we will hope for better success next month."

She then collected the required sum from some of her rich customers, who were always ready to help her in the time of need, because they knew she was honest and industrious. Biddy was married to a steady young carpenter, and he paid his rent very punctually.

In October, Minnie's needle work customers employed her to do their Winter's sewing, and she progressed more comfortably. On the first of November, Merton ate his breakfast, apparently as well as usual, which was as well as could be expected in a man of his evil habits. By this time, his dissipation was making sad inroads on his constitution. After having eaten his breakfast, he started on his way to work. When he had proceeded about half a square, he fell on the pavement, in a state of insensibility. Some of the witnesses of his fall knew him; they, with the assistance of others, carried him home, and put him on his bed.

Minnie covered him with bed-clothes, and then went on hurriedly with her sewing. She was so much accustomed to seeing him in a state of unconsciousness, that it did not alarm her in the least; but as they carried him past Biddy's room, she not being pre-occupied with any particular work to engross her attention, was forcibly struck with his peculiar appearance. But not wishing to frighten his wife with her own ideas of his case, she did not communicate her impressions to any one.

At about ten o'clock, Mrs. Bridd returned home from her morning's sales; then Biddy

told her the fears she felt regarding Mr. Malvers' appearance. She at once went to Minnie's room to inquire after him.

"I think," said Minnie, "he will be better in a little while."

"I will give him a look, at any rate."

Mrs. Bridd then went to his bed, and found he was looking very ghastly. She then said to Minnie—

"If he does not seem better when Olimond comes to his dinner, you had better send him after Dr. Nearest. It appears to me there is more ails him than usual."

The two women then busied themselves with their respective duties, without paying any more attention to Merton Malvers. When Olimond came home, and heard his father was sick, he finished his dinner in a hurry, and went to see him; he was terrified at his appearance, and went, as fast as his feet could carry him, to the office of Dr. Nearest.

That gentleman did not merit the name of a "good physician;" he was not willing to labor gratis for the relief of suffering humanity.

He was not many minutes in Minnie Malvers' small, third story back room, before he concluded that he was not in his proper element.

Still, he lingered a little while at the side of the sick man, and pretended to make an examination of his case; then turning towards Olimond, he said, very politely—

"This will be a lingering case, and I will not have time to attend it properly; you had better call in Dr. Newday, on Seventeenth street."

Olimond went at once to the office of Dr. Newday, who was out, and not expected home until two o'clock. He left directions that he should call to see his father as soon as possible. The person who received his message, wrote the words, "as soon as possible," under his name, in a cramped hand, which made them almost invisible, and they were not noticed by the doctor when he examined his slate.

Dr. Newday was employed by the county, to attend people who were too poor to fee a medical adviser. The sum he received was so small, that it kept him almost as poor as his patients; and he was exerting himself very anxiously to obtain as much better practice as he could. When he returned to his home, that day, it was three o'clock. He was as hungry as he dare be, with his narrow income, and his first movement was a dive into his little dining-room. When

his dinner was removed, he amused himself sometime in watching the noisy play of his little children. He was tired; had walked far, and felt in no hurry to renew his out-door duties. When, at last, he did take his slate in hand, he found on it quite a list of names; and very sorry he was, to see they all belonged to poor people, which he knew by their residences.

He did not notice the fanciful looking little flourish below Merton's name, which he should have read—"as soon as possible;" he therefore went on regularly in his visits, through the list on the slate, as he conscientiously practised "the first come first served" principle. By the time he reached Merton Malvers' case, it was long after five o'clock. He wrote a prescription, and told Minnie to send it to the Dispensary, where she could obtain the required medicine without paying for it. He then ordered mustard plasters to be applied on the back of his neck and ankles. As Minnie had no mustard in the house, she required it from the Dispensary, as well as the medicine.

Although Dr. Newday daily met with every variety of human misery, his heart was not hardened by the contact; on the contrary, his feelings were very much interested in the wel-

fare of his patients; and he now felt very sorry he had not seen his new charge at an earlier hour. His case was now so far advanced, that he could not hope he would ever recover from its effects. He saw, also, that Minnie was, in reality, suffering more than her husband was, and she would, he knew, very soon be in bed, under his care.

Long sorrow, incessant toil and meagre living, were working out their natural effects, as mercilessly upon her physical strength, as the demon of the still was doing on that of the other patient.

When Olimond came home, at about half-past six o'clock, before eating his supper, he started on his way to the Dispensary. He passed at least a dozen nearer drug-stores, but to them he dared not apply, because he had not the money to pay for the things he wanted.

When he arrived at the distant depot of "pills and powders," there were there before him at least half a dozen other seekers of the means of relief, for it was a busy hour of the day in the store. The assembled customers were all like Olimond, recently released from the services of the day, which they rendered, at poorly paid wages, to perhaps rich and money making employers.

Olimond was kept waiting a long time before he was attended to by one of the busy boys behind the counter. When he at last returned home, Biddy's husband kindly volunteered his assistance in turning Merton on the bed, before and after applying the mustard plasters. About fifteen minutes after they were on, the patient began to breathe more naturally, and improve in his appearance. Minnie then offered him a spoonful of medicine. With great difficulty he made out to swallow it. Biddy's husband, Jabez Underwey, remained with him until two o'clock in the morning, and gave him his medicine very faithfully. At that hour Biddy took his place in the sick room, while he sought in sleep, the rest which he needed to be prepared for his next day's labors.

The next morning, when Dr. Newday called, he found Merton decidedly improving, although he was still speechless, and incapable of moving either hand or foot. In this condition he lingered several weeks, and week after week Minnie grew more and more feeble, until, at last, she was too sick to leave her bed. Then it was that young Dr. Newday manifested his active benevolence. His wife was a distant relative of a rich and influential family. One evening, he

paid that family a long visit, and talked to them of Minnie's hopeless and helpless destitution so effectively, that, in the course of a few days, there was, in their circle of intimate friends, quite an interesting excitement raised in her favor. Calls from richly dressed ladies, followed by servants, bearing baskets of donations of the creature comforts of life, so abundantly poured on her, that Minnie felt as if she was suddenly transported from the city of starvation to the land of plenty.

Biddy, seeing all these nicely dressed ladies going past her room door to visit Minnie, resolved not to let their bounty surpass hers. She magnanimously gave up her own neatly and newly furnished best room to Minnie for her own private use, in which to receive her numerous high-quality calls. She cramped herself and husband in the best way she could, *pro tem.*, in her smaller back room.

The ladies hired a kind and professional nurse for Minnie, paid her the current and next month's rent in advance, and also engaged to give her four dollars a week for the maintenance of her family. On the eighteenth day of December, another daughter was born unto Merton and Minnie Malvers; and she was the little bud

of humanity which I found lying on her lap when I was so unexpectedly and strangely conducted to her presence.

CHAPTER XXII.

POOR RELATIONS.

When I returned to my sister, Mrs. Janes, I found her alone in the sitting-room, and I said—

"O, Sister Ann! I have found Cousin Merton Malvers, and his dear little wife, Minnie; but O! they are so poor that they are actually dependent upon charity for a living!"

"Cousin! Cousin Merton, indeed! You may cousin him if you like, Mrs. Dolly Dorane; I will not."

"Not cousin him? Why, I am sure we always did, ever since he first came to see us at Silveryville."

"O, yes! we did then, because we were giddy young girls, and did not care what we did."

"I do not see, Sister Ann, that our being a few years older, can possibly change our relationship to him."

"But, Dorothy Dorane, I say we are not his relations; at least not in my estimation; let me see—how was it? His great grand-father was our great grand-mother's second cousin. Now, if you will call that being related, there will be no end to the long strings of relations; every body will be constantly claiming to every body else, among all the kindreds of the earth. I do hope you will never mention him as 'our cousin' before Mr. Janes; he is very particular about such matters; and if he thought we were cousining with a beggared inebriate, he would never recover from the effects of it."

"I wish, Sister Ann, you would go see Minnie Malvers; will you go?"

"Yes, perhaps I will, some time when it may be convenient; I cannot go to-day. I would like well enough to see Minnie. I always liked her. I believe every body does. But I could never bear that Merton Malvers, ever since he pushed himself into the Emgreen family against their will. It was mean in him, and he did it only because he was too lazy to make his own fortune. I am not sorry he has come to want; but poor Minnie! I do pity her."

"Well, then, dear Sister Ann, do go see her. She has a beautiful babe, only ten days old.

She looks so weak and so pale, I don't think she will ever be well again. Do go see her very soon."

I began this conversation, fondly hoping I could prevail on my sister to join me in raising a small sum of money, regularly every month, towards Minnie's support. But the way in which she treated our relationship to Merton disappointed me on that subject, and I was obliged to relinquish it.

On my way from Minnie's house I had foolishly argued myself into believing that the lady who was so generously liberal of her money, as to force a new silk dress and cloth cloak on a sister who did not need them, would certainly aid, quite materially, towards the support of a cousin, to prevent his wife being dependent upon the charity of strangers. But I was mistaken in my judgment of her benevolence, and took another tack, which was to try to induce her to visit Minnie—see her destitute situation, and her bright looking children—hoping, if she saw them, she would feel an interest in their welfare, and endeavor to better their circumstances.

By the time the Christmas vacation expired, I returned to my own home. Mr. Janes re-

mained in the city. When the Administration changed, and he lost his office, he went into commercial engagements, by which he made money very fast. But I fear the more he makes the more he grasps it. Sister Ann never called on Minnie. I forgot the number of the house she lived in, and she would not undertake to find it without knowing it. Being a sub-tenant, her name was not in the directory; for the same reason, she never received a letter from me.

When Minnie's babe, which she named Rose Bridd, was four weeks old, Minnie's health was improved, and the doctor said he thought she might dispense with the services of a nurse.

After awhile, the ladies who had been so warmly interested in her comfort gradually ceased to visit her, and then Minnie left kind Biddy's neat, front room, and returned to her own more cheerless one in the third story. Merton, by this time, was so far recovered as to be able to eat and speak freely, and to move one arm and one foot; the others were still helpless.

Minnie, having her young babe and sick husband to take care of, could earn very little with her needle. The ladies who had done so much

for her at one time, as to almost overwhelm her with their kind and well-timed charity, were now tired of assisting her, and were spending their means and their benevolence in other channels.

Mrs. Bridd, at last, without consulting Minnie's will or wishes on the subject, applied for her relief, to the guardians of the poor. They gave her one dollar per week in money, and one dollar's worth of groceries.

The Winter and Spring passed away, and as the warm weather of Summer increased, the sufferings of Merton Malvers grew in amount with it. He could not turn himself in bed, and when oppressed with the fatigue and heat of lying long in one position, he would become very impatient, and formed the habit of giving vent to his feelings by kicking his one moveable foot against the bed-post. In this violent exercise, so often repeated, he rubbed the skin from his ankle, until it became very sore and painful. Finally, his foot gave him more trouble than any other part of his illness. Then his anger amounted to almost frantic exclamations. Not being able to sleep at night, he spent his time in making terrifying noises, so that he disturbed not only his own household, but also his more

distant neighbors. Some of these, at last, called on him one morning, and told him if he did not stop making such frightful noises at night, they would immediately have him taken to the alms-house. This threat had an effectual influence; and, after it was made, he always kept quiet during the night. He evidently had a great horror of going to the alms-house; but during the day, while his male neighbors were absent from their homes, attending to their daily toils, he kept the whole house and neighborhood in an agony, by making his hideous noises.

The complaints made to him on the subject, by his female neighbors, he treated with cold contempt. These daily disturbances he continued making until the middle of August.

About this time, a self constituted committee waited on Mrs. Bridd, and told her, if she did not remove that terrific lodger to some other place, they would report her house to the landlord as a public nuisance.

Mrs. Bridd was rejoiced to hear this threat, and thanked them very sincerely for having made it, as she was even more worried by her lodger than they were. She had, for some time, been thinking that the alms-house was the proper place for him, yet she never ventured to

name the subject to Minnie, as she knew it would pain her exceedingly.

But now it was plainly and unavoidably her duty to have him taken there, to prevent her own and his family from being turned out of the house.

As soon as the volunteer committee left her, she went to Minnie's room, and said, in a whisper—she did not want Merton to hear her—

"Do you know what a large visit I had just now, down stairs?"

"No," said Minnie; "I did not hear any visitors. Between the clamors of the baby, and the still worse cries of her father, I cannot hear anything beyond these two rooms."

"Sure enough! their voices are enough to drive you distracted; and I dare say, if the father would be quiet, the baby would not be half as cross as she is; she would sleep better, for she cannot now get half as much sleep as she needs; and that is why she cries so much."

"There is no doubt of that, Mrs. Bridd. If he only would be quiet! I have an idea that we might bribe him to be still, by offering some strong drink. I sometimes feel tempted to try the experiment; and would, if I had money plenty."

"I would not, my good friend; he has too

much strong drink in his system already. I would not give him one drop, even if I had possession of Girard's estate."

"I don't think it would be wrong to give him liquor as a medicine; and if it would quiet him, it seems to me, it would be doing the part of a very good medicine."

"I do not believe that alcohol should be used, even as a medicine, as long as any other remedy will produce the desired effect."

"Yes, but there is the difficulty, dear Mrs. Bridd; there is no other remedy in this case."

"I think I can find a better one; I am sorry, on your account, to be obliged to use it."

"What is your remedy, Mrs. Bridd? you are so good in all your ways, that what ever it is, it must be good if it comes from you."

"Unfortunately, this remedy is not my own; but it was most positively ordered to be given him, by the visitors who called on me a few minutes ago."

Minnie then began to suspect what the remedy was, and she wrung her hands in silent anguish a few moments, then said:—

"Poor Merton! your days on earth will very soon be numbered. Mrs. Bridd, he never will be restored to health in that place."

"Will he here?"

"Perhaps he will."

"He will not. At least, not for a long while; and I believe he will be more comfortable there than he is here, in many respects."

"That may be."

"It must be, Mrs. Malvers, for there he will have men nurses; and they can manage him much better than you can."

"But the idea of sending him there is very heart-rending."

"Mrs. Malvers, can we live on ideas?"

"I guess we would find them unsubstantial."

"Of course we would, even if they were good ones; but bad ones would be still more so."

"Now, the idea that it is heart-rending to go to the alms-house is very silly, and, in many cases, a very sinful idea. It has often driven many poor, homeless creatures to commit very wicked crimes. The neighbors, dear Mrs. Malvers, have told me that if he is not removed, they will report this house a public nuisance. If they do that, we will all be turned out; then where will we go?"

CHAPTER XXIII.

MERTON'S FORCED AND LAST REMOVAL.

The next morning, Mrs. Bridd went to the office of the guardians of the poor, and obtained all necessary directions how to manage Merton's removal to the alms-house.

Knowing, as they did, the opposition he would feel, no one dared mention the subject to him. Neither did they allow any of his children to know it, fearing they might talk about it in his hearing.

The preparations were all made without his knowledge. When the men who were to carry him down stairs entered his room, he looked at them very fiercely, and said—

"What do you want in here, strangers?"

"We want to take you an airing," said one of their number; "the doctors say a little ride will do you good."

He suspected what their object was, and said—

"Hang all the doctors in the city! I never asked them for their opinion. I don't want to go riding, and what is more, I will not."

As he said these words, he wound his left arm tightly around the head-post of the bedstead, and looked at the men defiantly.

The men expected to meet resistance, and had come in sufficient numbers to conquer any amount without difficulty. One of them said to him, very gently—

"Now, look here, Mr. Malvers, we have come here as your friends; and if you will take our advice and go with us willingly, we will do you no harm; but if you resist us, we will swear you are crazy, and we will carry you by force into a dark, gloomy cell, with other madmen."

Seeing there was no help for him, the miserable victim of intemperance knit his brow, grit his teeth, and in his parched heart he uttered wishes, "not loud but deep," on the heads of all the inhabitants of the earth. For the sake of guarding his very sore ankle, he was compelled to submit quietly to their superior strength, and allow them to carry him down stairs.

"Poor Minnie could not witness the removal. As soon as the men entered the house, she threw herself upon the bed, in the front room, and wept convulsively, until she heard his departure up the street.

She felt and knew that he would never, never

return. How she lamented over this bitter, bitter end to all the fond hopes and affections which, at one time, had centred in her "beloved Merton Malvers."

What years of agony and suffering he had led her through, in return for all her early love to him! And why did he lead her to such prolonged agony, to such intense suffering?

Why was he not to her what Mr. Emgreen had ever been to his wife? As many other men are to their wives? What Mrs. Bridd's husband had been to her—a guide, a guardian—the best of all earthly domestic blessings? Ah! why was he not? What made him so different from what he once was? So different from all she had hoped he would become to her? Why was it? Ah! why?

Because, for the love of gain, his fellow men—men! can they be men?—enticed him to drink the liquid fire which so often burns up, destroys and consumes all that is noble, good and lovely in human beings."

Ah! in all this "wide, wide world," in which there ever dwell every degree and kind of human sufferings, there are none so hopeless as the sorrows of the drunkard's wife.

When the front door was closed on Merton Malvers, and his bearers, Biddy and Mrs. Bridd,

went to Minnie, and they said and did all they could think of to comfort her.

"Mrs. Malvers, dear neighbor, do not grieve so after your husband," said Mrs. Bridd; "it is really much better he should be there than here; it is better for him, for you, and for your children."

"O, Mrs. Bridd! how can you say so?"

"Because I believe it."

"You would not if he was the father of your own children. Nothing would induce you to send George there."

"Yes, I would, if he was sick, and I had no way of keeping him."

"There are many people there," said Biddy, "whose relations don't fret about it at all."

"To be sure there are; and they ought," said Mrs. Bridd, "to be thankful to have them so well cared for."

"O," said Minnie, "I don't see how you can talk so!"

"You may depend, Mrs. Malvers, we know more about it than you do."

"I know I would rather have followed him to his grave."

"That is not a proper feeling."

"O, there are so many bad people over there!"

"That is true; there are plenty of them everywhere. If we want to escape them we must go to the grave. They are thick and full here, at our very doors."

"They will try all manner of experiments on him, and only make him worse."

"How do you know they will?"

"They always do."

"Come, come now, cheer up; and after a few days we will pay him a visit, and see how he likes his new home."

"Why, can we?"

"To be sure we can. Biddy will take care of your children while we go; will you not, Mrs. Biddy?"

"To be sure I will; and ye may stay as long as ye like."

"But we would never be able to find it."

"If we go on Saturday, we can take George for our guide; he can find any place in the county."

Gradually, Minnie's mind was diverted from mourning over the sorrows of her blighted life, by thinking of the intended visit to her husband. Shut up, as she had been, so many long, weary months, the trip, if not one of pleasure, was one of useful change to her feeble frame, and quite as much so to her sorrowing mind.

When Olimond was told where his father was, he was deeply afflicted. It was very sad to see one as young as he was, so bitterly, so keenly moved with heartfelt sorrow. He thought it was a disgrace, and therefore a more than common misfortune. Had his father been dead, he would not grieved more than he did.

On Isabel, the news of her father's removal had very little effect. She was, by this time, more interested in the affairs of Mrs. Loon's household, than she was in those of her mother's family. Olimond's grief was permanent. He was peculiarly sensitive in his feelings, and seemed to thirst after the approbation of his friends and neighbors. He gave so much satisfaction to his employers, that they increased his wages to two dollars a week, and promised to make them still higher at the end of the year. They were then to take him as an apprentice, and instruct him in the useful trade of manufacturing fancy and fine tin-ware.

When Isabel found Olimond's wages had been increased, she became ambitious of being favored in a similar manner. One day, as she was paying her customary visit home, she said—

"Mother, I think I have worked long enough for my food and raiment. The baker's wife, of

whom I sometimes buy cakes for Mrs. Loons, says she would be willing to give me seventy-five cents a week. With them I think I could buy better clothes than I now wear."

"You do not know anything about buying clothes, or you would not think so. They would scarcely keep you in bonnets and shoes."

"Do you think so, mother?"

"I know it."

"At any rate, whether it would or not, I think I am big enough to earn wages."

"So you are, if you can find any one willing to pay it."

"I think Mrs. Loons would be willing, if you would ask her."

"I will come down soon, and talk to her about it. I wish she would send you to school instead of paying you wages. That would do you more good."

"I am sure I don't, mother. The children would laugh at me; I do not even know my letters. Why did you not send me when I was younger?"

"For two very good reasons."

"Please to tell me what they were?"

"First, I could not afford to buy you decent clothes, and secondly, I could not spare you."

"Mrs. Loons, I know, will say she cannot spare me now. She keeps me as busy all the time as you ever did; and even if I wanted to go to school, I could not get a seat."

"Yes, you could, by waiting."

"The baker's wife says she has been waiting more than six months for a seat for her child."

Soon after that, Mrs. Loons agreed to give Isabel fifty cents per week, provided she would give them to her mother. She considered Isabel quite too young to have the management of money, and that she was well enough dressed for a girl of her age. But Isabel was never sent to school by Mrs. Loons.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE POOR HOUSE.

The poor house of Philadelphia county, often called Blockley, or Blockley Alms-house, consists of a magnificent collection of buildings, which stand on the West side of the river Schuylkill. They are surrounded by a farm, of about one hundred and eighty-seven acres. This

farm is bounded on the East by the Schuylkill. The institution called the alms-house, consists of four main structures, each one of which measures five hundred feet in length. They are three stories high, are well built, of strong stone-masonry; they stand on the four sides of a large yard. The main or front entrance of the establishment is adorned by an elegant and very stylish looking portico, facing the South-east, commanding an imposing and extensive view of the city of Philadelphia. This beautiful portico is built in the Tuscan order of architecture, and contains six columns; each column measures five feet diameter at the base, and thirty feet in altitude.

When this building is viewed from the exterior, the beholder cannot help realizing that it is a monumental palace, erected for the comfort and shelter of the poor of the land, of whom it is written, "they fail not." Here they fail not to find a permanent and magnificent abiding place.

This useful and benevolent institution is now—in the year 1861—a department of the great consolidated city of Philadelphia. Its affairs are managed by a board of gentlemen, who are called the guardians of the poor. They consist

of twenty-one members, and are elected annually by popular vote, in the first twenty and the twenty-fourth wards of the city, at the same time that the other city officers are elected.

Poor people, from any part of the county, are freely admitted to this establishment, by obtaintaining an order from one of the guardians, at their office, in Seventh street above Market.

There is a hospital for the sick, connected with the alms-house, which usually contains between four and five hundred invalids. They have numerous nurses, male and female, employed to attend them. There are, also, one chief and eight assistant physicians, residing near or in that part of the institution, who are paid by the guardians. There is also an asylum for children, in which there are constantly several hundred inmates, many of whom are diseased or deformed.

The floors of the poor house, the tables and seats are all of plain, unpainted boards. They are kept very white by frequent scrubbing. Young women, of foreign birth, have been known to leave the institution in displeasure, and gone to service, in preference to living where they were so frequently occupied with scrubbing brushes.

In Watson's Annals of Philadelphia, we find the following notice of this useful institution:—

"The original poor house for the city, was located down town, extending from Spruce to Pine streets, and from Third to Fourth streets. Its front was to the East, and nearest to Third street. Its great gate was on Spruce, and its entrance by Third street was by a stile. The house was much such a structure* as that of the Friends alms-house, in Walnut street; it had a piazza all around. It contained the sick and insane as well as the poor. There were also some parts of the building formed near the corner of Union and Fourth streets, on the site now occupied as the premises of Dr. Physick, from which cause, I find, in 1758, it was called the alms-house down Fourth street, and the alms-house square.

"The present alms-house, out Spruce street, was begun in 1760, was first occupied in 1767. †The square of nearly four hundred feet square, on which the building stands, cost then but eight hundred dollars. Who can tell its rise of value since? It was then, however, quite a place in the country, and near the woods, having a fine orchard on the square on its northern front."

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* A low, two storied brick building.

† Between Ninth and Tenth, Spruce and Pine.

This last named building was similar in size to the present—1861—Penn Hospital on Pine street. In or about the year 1833, the institution was removed to its present location, on the other side of the Schuylkill, to buildings more than four times larger than those which were commenced for it one hundred years ago.

This was the abode to which Merton Malvers was so forcibly and reluctantly borne.

He was in a rage with his captors, and if he had been gifted with one-half the ability he once possessed, he would have given them an abundance of unacceptable, tangible evidences of the state of his feelings. Not having the bodily strength to do that, he made up the deficiency by the magnitude of the hatred with which he looked on everything around him; as he did so he said to himself—

"I'll fix them; I have not the strength to fight them; the cowards, they know that, or they would not have dared to touch me; but I'll fix them; I will not eat one morsel of food as long as they keep me here; and when they see I will not eat, they will be glad to carry me away."

He formed this resolution the moment he entered the house, and he adhered to it most firmly. At first the nurses and the doctors per-

suaded, then reasoned with him on the folly of his course, but he remained insensible to all their persuasions and reasonings.

When he had been about three days in the institution, his wife and Mrs. Bridd paid him a visit. They carried with them some edibles, which they knew he was fond of. He ate them very ravenously. No wonder; for he had not tasted one mouthful of solid food since his departure from home. He willingly drank the alms-house milk as often as they gave it to him; but he would not taste the tea or coffee. While Minnie was there he said to her, very ironically—

"The bread and butter here are elegant. I never tasted better."

Minnie knew nothing about his refusing to eat. The nurses would not tell her, because she looked so pale and weak. They thought it would only worry her, without benefitting him or any one else.

In about two weeks after his entrance to the alms-house, he died. The physician who had him in care, thought he died as much from want of food as from disease.

When it was known to the officers of the house that he was dead, they sent a message to Minnie, stating that she could take away his re-

mains for interment, if she wished to. But she was so much straitened for the means of procuring bread for her children, and for the payment of her rent, that she could not afford to defray the expenses of a funeral. He was, therefore, buried in the unmarked and unhonored grave of a pauper; because, while he lived, he chose to be the slave of tyrannical old King Alcohol.

The following Winter, Mrs. Sansonn exerted herself in Minnie's favor, and presented her a ton of coal; prevailed on one of her relations to give her a barrel of flour, and another helped her with some bed-clothes and wearing apparel. These were acceptable blessings. On account of a distressing cough, and a severe pain in her side, she could not earn as much by her needle as the necessities of her children demanded.

Several years passed away. Olimond and Isabel remained in their respective places; both their wages had been increased, and they formed the main support of the family. Their mother suffered so much from sickness, that she could earn very little in any way.

All these years George Bridd was kept regularly and steadily at school by his kind mother, and he finally repaid her kindness, by becoming

a graduate, with the highest honors, of the Philadelphia High School.

One of the directors of the public schools had formerly been George's Sunday school teacher; he felt deeply interested in his welfare, and said to him one day, when he called to see him—

"What are you going to do when your school duties are closed?"

"I do not know, sir."

"What would you like to do?"

"I would like to have a profession, if I had the means of procuring one; but as I have not, I must go to work at whatever occupation I can find the soonest. I cannot think of allowing my mother to support me any longer. I must now live to support her. To do that well, sir, is my present most urgent desire."

"I believe," said the director, "I can put you in a situation by which, if you are very industrious and frugal, you will be able to support her, and also obtain your favorite profession."

George was so thankful that he could not speak; he could only look his gratitude, and that he did very eloquently.

"We will say no more about it," said his friend, "until we are a little more certain of not meeting with a disappointment regarding it. I

hope, in a few days, I will be able to give you more decided information on the subject."

At the end of two weeks, George Bridd received a note, containing the welcome information that he was duly appointed to a situation, in a village about thirty miles from Philadelphia. He was required to give only six hours, daily, to his official duties. For his salary, he was to receive five hundred dollars a year.

Mrs. Bridd was not half as much pleased with the contents of that note, as Master George was. She had never lived in the country, and did not think she would like it. But she could not think of being separated from him.

He comforted her by the assurance that he did not expect to keep the place more than three years, at farthest. By that time, he hoped he would be through with his professional studies, and then be able to support her in the city, with more ease and comfort than she had enjoyed since the death of her husband.

Mrs. Bridd was also very much grieved at the idea of parting with her good friends, Minnie Malvers and Biddy Underwey.

Mrs. Bridd and her son George, were to take up their abode in their new home on the first day of April. It was now the middle of March.

Biddy and Minnie, and Biddy's husband, held together a consultation upon the interesting subject of their removal from their present dwelling-place.

From some cause, known only to himself, Biddy's husband, Mr. Jabez Underwey, did not like the location of the one they then occupied, and on the end of the consultation, it was decided by these three sub-tenants, that Jabez would rent a house somewhere, to suit his own wishes, and that Minnie would rent a couple of rooms from him. Jabez was being well prospered in his business. He was receiving very high wages, and he conceived the idea that Pearl street was not the proper place for his abode.

A few days after the consultation, Jabez came home to his dinner, looking very much pleased. He said he had found a place which he believed would suit them all, as well as any they could expect to find in a month

It was a neatly finished, new, two storied dwelling in Wood street. In the rear there was a three roomed back building of wood, very old, and much cracked; still, it was tenantable; the roof did not leak, the window glazing was whole, and the timbers were still strong enough to prevent the fear of its falling down during the next half score of years.

Jabez proposed that he would rent the front part of this establishment, and that Minnie should take the frame back building.

The landlord was anxious to rent them both together, but would agree to let the two buildings at the same time in this proposed plan. He saw that Jabez would be a desirable tenant, but it was his firm resolve never to rent one of his houses to any person who intended to have in it a sub-tenant.

The rent of the back building was four dollars per month. About this time, Olimond's and Isabel's earnings were again increased, and therefore, Minnie concluded she might venture to undertake this increase in her monthly expenditure. Even if she had been ever so much afraid to venture, she did not see what else she could do. Biddy and Jabez Underwey had their hearts fixed upon the Wood street house. Circumstanced as she was, she could not leave home and run about in the cold winds of March to hunt a cheaper dwelling-place; so she ventured to agree to the proposed removal. As she did it, she said to herself—

"We will have to live poorer, to save from our table expenses as much money as we can, to pay this increase in our rent."

They moved into Wood street, into one room up stairs, and two others below. The first time Isabel visited her mother after the removal, she said to her—

"How nicely you have fixed up the old place! Did Biddy help you, mother?"

"Yes, a great deal; and so did George and Mrs. Bridd. I don't think I would have lived through the moving without their help."

"They are very kind. Is it not very pleasant to have two rooms down stairs?"

"Yes, very."

"You can live like other folks, now, mother. You have the inner room so fixed up, that it looks quite like a parlor."

"Not very parlorified, with this patched and darned old carpet on the floor."

"Well," said Isabel, "if the carpet is patched, it is done so neatly that no one would ever notice it. It looks so bright and clean, mother; did they wash it?"

"No; they carried it to the vacant lot, and gave it a good, hard beating with sticks and broom-handles."

Isabel was very much pleased with the change of residence made by her mother.

CHAPTER XXV.

NIGHT SCHOOL.

Olimond, also, appeared to be much better contented in Wood street than he had been in Pearl street, ever since the illness of his father. His earnings were now higher than they had ever been; and by working until a late hour in the night, at "over work," he was enabled to increase them very considerably.

Minnie earned what she could by the use of her needle, and by dint of strict economy they got along very comfortably through the Spring. They made out to pay their rent, and live along through the Summer, some how; exactly the way how, was a mystery sometimes to even Minnie herself. In the Fall, Minnie's health improved, and she was enabled to exert herself at her needle work; her hands were soon full of it, and she often wished that Isabel could assist her with it. But Isabel was a miserable needle user. She had been as cruelly neglected in that branch of useful learning, as she had been in others.

By living more comfortably in Wood street than they had before done, and by being much praised by his employers, Olimond began to be uncommonly ambitious, and to wish to experience still better and higher things. He now began to realize the great disadvantages under which he labored, by not being a better scholar than he was.

Under the influence of these new impressions, he formed the determination of going to a night school for young men and women, which was then in successful operation in his new neighborhood. He attended it very regularly for a few weeks, and then became so much delighted with his studies, and the progress he made in them, that he formed, in his own mind, the wish to have Isabel go with him to the same, said night school. He called to see her one Sunday afternoon, and proposed that she should accompany him to his school, on the evening of the following day.

"I cannot go, Olimond," she said; "Mrs. Loons will never permit me to go out at night."

"Not if I call for you and bring you home safe?"

"That would not make any difference. She will not leave me go, because I have to take

care of the children, while the nurse sews in her room."

This statement of affairs made him feel sadly disappointed. That night, after having retired to his rest, he lay awake a long time, thinking over many plans by which he hoped he might succeed in having Isabel accompany him to school. He thought she had never looked so handsome as she had done that day, as he saw her standing in Mrs. Loons' kitchen, occupied in washing the family dinner dishes.

"She is my sister," he muttered to himself, and it is a shame to see her spending her whole life in that old kitchen, without ever learning how to read or write. I must try to get her out of it as soon as I can."

Olimond was then beginning to feel quite proud of his fair young sister, whom he had never seemed to love much when they were living together under the same roof.

Soon after this, one of Olimond's work-mates talked to him about his sister—not Olimond's—but his own sister Mary; he said she was able to earn five dollars per week by making silk fringe. This casual remark, made without much reflection, set his mind violently in motion, with the wish that his sister Isabel could imme-

diately learn the trade of fringe making. It was a pity he did not recognise the fact that the best and safest trade for a poor girl, in a large city, is the trade of being a good and industrious housekeeper. This is a trade that never fails, never gets out of fashion or out of date; it always commands good wages, united with good boarding; it is one that possesses fewer temptations than any other. This fact is too often forgotten by many young women, who crowd our city factories, where they often lose their health, or their reputation, or their employment, then become miserable for the want of a home and a safe place of shelter. All these things were disregarded by Olimond; all he did regard was, that Isabel should learn fringe making, and go with him to night school.

That night, after Olimond had eaten his supper, and the other children were asleep, he unburdened his mind to his mother, of this—to him—very important scheme of procuring for Isabel a night school education. After he had run on some time in its favor, his mother said—

"It would be very fine if Isabel could learn to read and write, and make fringe, and earn five dollars a week; but I am afraid she will

always be a slow learner at anything. We had better leave her where she is."

A few days after this conversation between Olimond and his mother, Mr. Loons was fatally injured by an accident in the street, and was carried home in a dying condition. He breathed his last before the dawn of another day. As the income on which his family had depended for their support, was lost by his death, Mrs. Loons was forced to move into a smaller house, and dismiss all her servants except one. The one she saw proper to retain, was not Isabel Malvers.

These eventful changes seemed to favor Olimond's plans and wishes about the fringe making and night school scheme.

The day after Isabel's return home from Mrs. Loons' house, she applied for a situation at a silk fringe manufactory. After waiting a few weeks, she was admitted as a learner; and, according to contract with the proprietors, she was to give them all her time and labor during the next several weeks, in payment for which they were to teach her the art of making silk fringe, in all its various branches. She began to learn about the middle of December, and was kept very hard at work from six o'clock in the morning

until the same time in the evening, excepting only one hour at noon.

At half-past seven o'clock, during three evenings in the week, she accompanied her brother Olimond to the night school. Her progress in learning was very slow. She decidedly had no taste for letters. Yet, she was pleased with the novelty of the enterprise, and went on attending the school, more for pleasure than profit. On their way home from the school-house, they were sometimes accompanied by several of their school-mates, who manifested a desire to become better acquainted with them.

Upon these friendly advances, Olimond always frowned, for he was not of a sociable disposition. But Isabel loved company, and wanted to return their advances with double interest; more especially so, towards a lad named Patrick Franinigen. Olimond said and thought the very name of the aspiring youth was an offence, and declared that Isabel should not speak to him. The contention between the brother and sister, upon this social subject, finally ran so high and grew so warm, that Isabel resolved she would not attend the night school any more.

This firmly formed resolution she unflinchingly adhered to. Her not attending the school

was a bitter disappointment to Olimond; and as he blamed young Patrick for being the cause of it, he grew to dislike him more than he did any other living creature. He soon learned to look upon him as an enemy.

Patrick, on his part, was too much pleased with Isabel's pretty face and pleasant company, to relinquish the satisfaction they afforded him. He, therefore, sometimes met her, as if by accident, on her walk between her own home and the fringe making establishment. After awhile, he formed the habit of waiting for her every evening near the door of the manufactory in which she worked, and then he would either take a walk with her in some other direction, or accompany her to her own door, according to circumstances and her wishes. She never invited him to walk in when at the door of her own home, for fear of—she hardly knew what.

About this time, all of Minnie's children, except Olimond and Isabel, were taken very sick with measles. Minnie was obliged to give up her sewing to nurse them. Before a week passed away, she was nearly overcome with fatigue and loss of sleep. They remained very ill ten days. Minnie sent word to Isabel's employers, begging them to allow her the liberty

of remaining home a few days, to assist in the nursing of her sick children. They answered, they were too busy to spare her.

These were hard times of suffering for poor Minnie. No one in the family was earning anything, except Olimond. He was obliged to give up attending night school, and spend his time, until a late hour, every evening, over his work-bench, earning extra wages. Finally, the two oldest of the sick children died, within a few days of each other. Then it was that Minnie greatly missed the useful and able help of her absent friend, Mrs. Bridd. Biddy was kind, and willing to perform all the duties of a sincere and worthy friend in need. But she had not the ability to make herself comfortably useful, that Mrs. Bridd so abundantly possessed.

In the first excitement of her sympathy for Minnie's sorrow and necessities, she ran for relief and comfort to Mrs. Sansonn. When she had delivered her sad account of this new bereavement which had befallen Minnie, that lady said—

"Lost another child, has she? Why, it seems to me her children are always dying; I am afraid she does not take good care of them."

"Indade, ma'am, said Biddy, "she takes the

very best care of them. Sure, a better mother niver lived, than is that same Mrs. Malvers."

"I am sorry for her; you may give her this note to help her along with the funeral. But, if any more of her children die, I think you had better apply to the county for the means of burying them. It appears to me, I have given Mrs. Malvers as much time and money as I can afford."

After Biddy left her, the lady talked to herself very much in this style—

"I have been helping and helping that same Mrs. Malvers until I am tired of it. It seems to me there is continually some demand made on my time or money on her account, until I am weary of the subject."

But she did not remember there was One near her, and around all her pathway through life, from the earliest dawn of her existence until the present hour, who never wearied of supplying her wants. She forgot that the same benign Being never wearied in bestowing on her the choicest, richest blessings of health, wealth and happiness. She never, for one moment, thought of the possibility of His growing weary in blessing her. She had so long, daily and hourly, received these blessings, that

she felt as if they were hers by the right of inheritance.

When the next sick child died, Biddy did not ask the assistance of Mrs. Sansonn, but went to her own friends, neighbors and acquaintances. After a great deal of delay, labor and trouble, she succeeded in collecting enough to defray the expenses of a very plain and cheap funeral. The recovery of the other children was very slow. The weather was excessively cold; fuel was measured to the family in stinted quantities; the consequence was, that Minnie caught a violent cold which, added to the prolonged fatigue she had endured, nursing the sick children, her grief over the recently deceased ones, and the want of proper nourishment and judicious medical aid, threw her upon a bed of sickness.

During its long continuance, she suffered much from want of good nursing. Isabel was absent all day, at her fringe learning. The other children were too young to be either skilful or attentive nurses. Dr. Newday had left the neighborhood, and his successor did not care whether his patients died or recovered. Biddy occasionally went to see her, and did as much as she could to make her comfortable.

One day she found her in great trouble. She had spent the last cent of Olimond's earnings for the last week, and now there was not a mouthful of food of any kind in the house. Biddy had previously feared that things would come to this state, and had provided for Minnie's use some soup-house tickets. But she was unwilling to mention the subject to the invalid; and at the same time, she was averse to going to the soup-house herself, for fear the neighbors would think it was for her own benefit. As the hour approached at which Olimond and Isabel would come to their dinner, Biddy told Minnie not to fret any more about their dinner that day, as she knew how to provide them with a very good one. She then said:—

"Mrs. Malvers, will you allow your son Frank to go in my room a little while?"

"Yes," said Minnie; "you may keep him there as long as you please."

Biddy and Frank then left Minnie, and when they entered the other dwelling, she handed him a bright, tin kettle, a basket, and some tickets. She directed him where to go, and how to use them, in order to procure some excellent beef soup, and a large loaf of bread. She also said to him—

"When you get the soup and bread, carry them, as fast as you can, to your mother; and if she asks you where they came from, tell her she must ask me."

This was on a Friday. The next day, at noon, the family dinner at Minnie's was procured at the same place, and in the same way. They all enjoyed it, without asking any questions about where it had come from. On Saturday night Olimond brought home, as usual, his hard earned week's wages.

The said wages sufficed to supply his family with food and fuel until the next Friday, and then there was a repeated application for relief made at the soup-house.

Meanwhile, Isabel's term of learning to make fringe came to a close, and she was hired to work at the art. During her first week of being paid, she earned only enough to buy a thick, warm shawl. She greatly needed it, and did not see how she could do without it. The next week she earned enough to buy her mother a warm winter dress; the first new dress she had seen of her own, for many long years. On the following week, Isabel and several other hands were dismissed from the fringe making establishment, because there was nothing there

for them to do; the stores were all supplied, and had ceased giving orders. In other words, the busy season was over, and Isabel was out of employment until the beginning of the next busy season; when that would be, she could not learn.

She then nursed her mother, and kept the house in order very nicely, but she could not aid in supporting the family. That had all to be done by the labors of Olimond; and he worked faithfully to accomplish it. But when the month's rent became due, there was nothing to pay it. When the landlord called for the money, he bore his disappointment very well, and said he hoped Minnie would be well very soon, and that she would then be able to make it up. But time passed away, and Minnie did not get well.

Hoping thereby to be able to save up something towards the rent, the soup and bread were more and more frequently sent for, until, one day, it happened that, as Olimond was coming to his dinner, he overtook his little brother Frank, carrying home the soup, while two or three of Patrick Franinigen's younger brothers were shouting after him, from their alley gate—

"Frank Malvers, the soup-house beggar! the soup-house beggar!"

The neighbors had discovered where so many good dinners had come from, long before Olimond did. He went into his mother's room, in a violent passion; tossing his cap into a corner, he exclaimed, with a burning face and a trembling voice—

"Is this what I am working so hard for, day and night—to be called a beggar?"

"Nobody called you a beggar, my son."

"It is the same; they called Frank a beggar; we are one."

CHAPTER XXVI.

VISITING COMMITTEE—BOB BLAZENBILL.

Poor Minnie! she was always so glad to see, and be nourished by the charity of the soup-house, that she had not cared to ask where it came from. Olimond would not eat a mouthful of dinner, and he told his mother that if his brother was ever again sent to the soup-house, he would run away and go to sea.

That afternoon, when Biddy called to see Minnie, she was told, by Isabel, of her brother

Olimond's unwillingness to have the soup sent for.

"Poor fellow!" said Biddy; "and what can I do for ye now? If ye cannot git the bread and soup, ye will surely niver be able to save up yer rint."

"Indeed, Biddy," said Minnie, "I am sure I do not know what to do about my rent; in one week more, I will owe two months' rent, and I have not more than one dollar towards it."

"I will," said Biddy, "apply for ye to the commetty."

"To the what?"

"To the vasiting commetty, who have been gavin' Molly Maguire, over the way, two dollars a week all the Winter; and she is not half as seck as ye are."

"Who are the committee?"

"Sure, my darlint, they are two leddies, who go aboot hunting after poor folks."

"O!" said Minnie; "if they hunt all day, I am sure they will not find any poorer than we are. But, Biddy, we must try not to let Olimond know anything about it."

In the course of a few days, the visiting committee were prepared to call on Minnie. She and her daughter were expecting the visit, and

wishing to receive it with all due respect, Isabel gave several brightening-up touches to their humble home. The walls of the sitting-room were freshly whitewashed; the carpet, though old and patched, and very much darned, was nicely shaken, and so neatly tacked to the floor that it looked very decent; the windows were washed and wiped until they shone in a bright polish, and over them were hung short, thin curtains, of snowy muslin; to be sure, the fabric of which they were made was old and full of long darns; yet, in its glossy smoothness, fresh from her ironing-board, it looked almost as good as new.

Then she insisted that, as her mother was so much better that day—the excitement and hopefulness of the anticipated visit buoyed up her strength amazingly—she should be dressed in her best dress; the new one she had so lately earned, and, by her mother's directions, had made. The fit was not the neatest in the world; but Isabel resolved to remedy that evil, by wrapping her own new shawl around the wearer until the visit was concluded. In short, they, in many ways, tried to make themselves and their home look as decent and respectable as they could be made to look, all out of respect

to the ladies who were to favor them with a visit. Their doing so was very bad policy. They should have done exactly the contrary, if they wished to excite the sympathy of their expected new acquaintances. But Minnie had fallen into poverty too late in life, to learn how to be politically poor. It is an art that must be learned in early life, or never.

At last, the ladies came. Their entrance was quite an affair; such a display of flowers, flounces and feathers, silks, satins and velvets, furs, ribbons, laces and jewelry, was surely, never at one time, until then, enclosed between the four walls of that old, little room. How the appearance of so much splendor dazzled and awed the feelings of the visited; and how much meaner, and poorer than ever, did their own dress now seem to them!

The ladies asked a great many questions, some of which were quite useless, and some were very painful. They soon learned that Minnie's present most urgent want, was the sum of seven dollars, for the payment of the last two months' rent, that would be due in a couple of days.

After they were through with their list of questions, one took a long, and almost over-

flowingly filled silk purse from her pocket, and with as much ceremony and parade as it was possible to exercise on the occasion, drew therefrom a twenty-five cent piece, and gave it to Minnie, with the faintly expressed wish that she would succeed in raising the rest of the needed amount all in good time.

The other lady then said—

"If you will send one of your children, with a tin-cup or bowl, to our alley gate, every morning, between nine and ten o'clock, our cook will give you our cold tea grounds, and they will be something, to help you along with your own and children's breakfast."*

The visiting committee then took their departure, and were never again heard from by Minnie Malvers. When they had regained the open street, one of the ladies said to the other—

"The idea of that woman pretending to be poor! Her room is as neat and comfortable as my own."

"But she looks very pale and delicate," said the other.

"I do not consider people in delicate health, while they are able to sit up, out of bed."

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* A fact.

The final resolve of their dialogue was, that they had other persons on their visiting list, who looked much poorer than Minnie Malvers did, and that it was their duty to relieve them in preference to her, although those very same persons were earning living wages, at various kinds of labor, to which they had been accustomed all their adult days.

This fresh disappointment, in not receiving more weighty aid from the visiting committee, had a very serious effect on Minnie's health, and she felt much worse for it. But where hope had raised her she was now kept by despair, and under its exciting influence she rallied her strength and made out to keep from sinking under the weight of her many wants and woes. With Isabel's support, she walked to her nearest customer, and procured some needle work. It could not be completed in time to be of any avail for the payment of the rent; but she hoped to make thereby a beginning towards that of the next month's bill.

Her heart sank within her, whenever she remembered the fast approaching time, at which she knew the landlord would make his accustomed monthly call. Yet she worked on, as industriously as her feeble health would permit,

and tried hard to instruct Isabel in a skilful use of her needle. But Isabel's needle was refractory, and would not receive instructions; it would incessantly bend, break, rust, or get lost, until poor Minnie, in despondence, inwardly declared that it was a waste of her time to try to make it useful. On the rent pay-day, the landlord called at about one o'clock. Minnie gave him the one dollar and a quarter, and told him she was very sorry, but that it was all she had been able to collect for him.

He looked at her inquiringly, but said nothing. He silently held the five silver quarters in the palm of his hand, as if he was deliberating what he should do with them. While he remained doing so, little Frank came in, bearing on his arm a small basket, filled with half-burned stone coal, that he had picked up on an open lot in the neighborhood, which was used as a reservoir of city coal ashes.

"Is that the way you are supplied with fuel?" asked the landlord.

"Yes sir, at present; times are hard, and we cannot afford to buy it."

"Why do you not apply for coal at some of the benevolent society offices?"

"We have, sir, applied at three, and have been told at them all that they have not any."

"Then go to the guardians of the poor."

"I was there, and received a quarter or a third of a ton, I believe they called it; that was so worthless, and burned away so fast, I was both afraid and ashamed to tell them how soon it was all gone. But even if I would go, they would not give me any more this Winter."

The landlord then returned to Minnie the five silver coins that he still held in his hand, and told her to buy as much coal as she could with them; for, said he—

"I would as leave you should owe me eight dollars as six and three-quarters."

Minnie thanked him very much, and the direful troubles—a lack of fuel and meeting the demands of an unpayable rent were then put to rest for a few weeks. This, though a short, was a blessed relief.

On the evening after Olimond discovered his brother's having been sent to the soup-house for his family dinner, he had on hand a job of over work, which he wished to finish before he went home to his supper. When the regular day's work was closed, at six o'clock, Olimond threw himself, at full length, on an old settee, which

stood behind the stove in his workshop. He felt strangely weary and worn out, poor fellow! and no wonder, for he sadly needed the refreshment of the dinner he had refused to eat. In a few minutes he was left alone. It did not take his fellow laborers much time to be prepared to march away, "homeward bound." As soon as the striking of the clock proclaimed the hour of release from their daily toil, away they all bounded, to eat their well earned evening meal.

After they had gone, and the shop was left to himself, Olimond wrung his hands in tearful anguish, and muttered, in a low voice—

"O, my lot is a hard, hard one! a sick mother, and all those little children to support; it seems to me, sometimes, that they are eating the very life away from me; and yet, the worst part of it all, is to be called a beggar. O! I wish—but I must get up and go to work, or they will be really and altogether beggars."

With that painful thought, he jumped up, and bent over his evening's work. Pale he was, and trembling with fatigue and hunger; yet he resolutely struggled against their powerful hindrances, by reflecting that if he did not work, work, work, even beyond his strength, his mother would, by necessity, be forced to take

refuge where his father had died, the victim of his own depraved appetite. He worked on, bravely and steadily, without interruption, until half-past eight o'clock. He was progressing with his evening's work as fast as could be expected, when he heard the door at the foot of the workshop stairs slowly opened, then shut quietly, then a heavy, lingering, unsteady thump, thump, tramp, tramp, of a man's step was heard ascending the dark, steep staircase. In a few minutes, the door of the workshop was pushed open, and very slowly, a tall, awkward figure walked in and seated itself on the old settee. Olimond knew all about who it was that entered, without looking up from his work, for he was used to meeting him in these lonely evenings, while he was doing his over work. The intruder's name was Bob Blazenbill. He was a relative—a near one, too—of Olimond's employers. He led such an irregular, dissipated life, that he was forbidden to enter the domestic circle of his relations; but they allowed him to take refuge in the shelter of the workshop, whenever he saw proper. They did not wish his vicious habits to contaminate the presence of their own children. But he was freely permitted to work all the evil he wanted to, on the workmen and boys

of the establishment. What matter did it make whether or not these latter were blighted, for time and eternity, by the evil example and temptations of bright Bob Blazenbill? They could be led by him to the same downward road to ruin in which he was stumbling, staggering, straying, reeling, without adding any fresh disgrace to their family reputation.

After Olimond's job was finished, he sat a few minutes to rest himself on the settee. Bob then gave a peculiar kind of a whistle, and said—

"Have a drink, my man?"

He had often asked the same "man" the same question, and had always been answered with a rude repulse; but on this occasion, poor Olimond was too weak from hunger to be repulsive; he was weak, and, naturally enough, parleyed with his tempter.

Instead of acting as he was accustomed to, when speaking with "old Bob," as the workmen called him, he said:—

"Have a drink? yes, if you will give me a drink of good, hot coffee."

"Coffee! coffee is splash, fit only for women and children. Punch—punch, hot, strong and sweet—that's the drink for men on such a night as this."

Olimond continued to sit on the old settee to rest: he thought, Bob and his master, old Satan, saw him sitting there to become their prey. While he sat and rested, Bob was not idle; he had a box in the shop, of which he always carried the key; and from its mysterious depths he soon dug out all the requisite ingredients and utensils for the manufacturing and drinking a pitcher full of hot whiskey punch. When it was all ready, Olimond drank a large glass of it, then started for home. As he was passing Biddy's front door, he found her husband, Jabez, standing at it, as if he was there watching for his return. He said—

"Olimond, my wife wants to see you."

They entered Biddy's house together. As soon as Biddy saw them, she said:—

"Olimond, I had some nice buckwheat cakes and sausages for supper, and as I know you like them, I have saved some, hot, for you, and a bowl of hot coffee, too. Now, sit down, my dear boy, and let me have the pleasure of seeing you ate them."

Olimond did not need a second invitation, but ate and enjoyed his good supper.

Biddy admired Olimond's self-sacrificing love to his mother, and her other children, very

much, and made it a point to give him something nice to eat, whenever she could. She knew that on this particular night he needed it, and had acted accordingly.

Bob Blazenbill and the master of his choice, did not find in Olimond as easy a victim as they had hoped he would be. He would not again taste Bob's hot punch, no matter how well he sweetened it.

Minnie slowly recovered her accustomed measure of health and strength, and she was so anxious to keep at work at her needle, that she almost forced herself to forget her aches and pains, and her distressing cough, in order to earn some money towards her back rent. But about this time, one of those unaccountable and mysterious upward flights in the prices of all eatables took place in Philadelphia.

Flour was so amazingly high priced, that bread had to be eaten with fear and trembling. Butter was so dear, that it dared not be looked at by poor people. Meats of all kinds were, in their prices, beyond all endurance; and as far as fruits and vegetables were concerned, one might very reasonably suppose they had been reared in beds of gold and silver, to be worth half the prices that were asked for them. Sugar, tea

and coffee failed not to keep their extravagant company, and the consequence of all this was, that when Minnie went to market or to the shops, with fifty cents in her hand, to procure therewith a dinner for her household, and ascertained the utmost quantity of provisions which she could procure with such a trifling sum, she was struck dumb with consternation, amazement and despondence. She was driven to make the conclusion that, struggle and labor as hard as she and Olimond might, they could not, by their united efforts, more than earn enough to save the family from starvation.

CHAPTER XXVII.

AGAIN PUT OUT—A PLEASANT RETREAT.

Thus time wore slowly away; the last day of the month of March was fast approaching, and Minnie was still without the means of paying her rent. Isabel was, by this time, tired of her home, and she ardently wished she had learned some other trade instead of making fringe. Spring was fast approaching, and with

its warm, fine weather, and long, sunshiny days, she would greatly need several additions to her wardrobe, which could not be procured without money. The money she so sadly needed, she felt she could never earn with her needle, at plain sewing, as her mother did. On these accounts, she felt desirous to hire out as a domestic. One of her acquaintances procured her a situation which she thought would be a very pleasant one; but Isabel liked it so little, that she did not keep it more than two weeks. Then another one was obtained, with precisely the same result. Then another, and another shared the same fate.

In this way Isabel spent her time, running about trying new places, not one of which ever came up to her ideas of what was an endurable one. Thus spending her time, she earned but little, and she was, moreover, a source of much painful anxiety to her mother.

In sorrow, dread and sadness, the month of March passed away. The weather was very cold, and fuel burned away with wonderful rapidity.

About this time, Biddy's husband, Jabez Underwey, was unusually prospered in his business. His affairs were looking up, and he be-

came ambitious; so much so, that he wished to be the master of his own workshop, in which he might, at night and other odd times, do many jobs of carpenter work, which he could not do in any other place. And where, in all the wide world, could he find another place which would answer his purpose as well as the back frame building, which was occupied by his wife's friend, Minnie Malvers?

A few days before the first of April, he went to see his landlord, and said:—

"I am very sorry, sir, that I have been the means of finding you such a poor tenant as Mrs. Malvers is."

"O, well!" answered the landlord, very good naturedly, "do not fret about it. She will do better in future, I hope."

"There is but a poor prospect of that, I fear, sir," said Jabez, with becoming gravity.

"She is well now," argued the landlord, "and her daughter has gone to work again, has she not?"

"She is sometimes at work, and sometimes at home, as it happens best to please her fancy. I don't think any of her earnings will ever help to pay her mother's rent."

"Do you think not?"

"And I think, sir, that things will be worse there, a long time, before they are better, or I am no judge of consequences."

"I am sorry to hear you say so," said the landlord; "I have had a great deal of patience with them, on account of their sickness; but, if their affairs are not likely to improve, I will have to put them out."

"You may depend, sir, they will not improve."

"What makes you so positive in your opinion on that subject?"

"Well, sir, the reason is simply this. The other evening, Olimond came in our house, on his way home from work, and I perceived whiskey on his breath. Now, sir, when a boy of his age drinks whiskey, can you expect his affairs will ever be likely to improve?"

"No, no, no; of course they cannot; but can it be possible that he drinks?"

"I tell you, sir, I know he had been drinking that night."

"That is very bad, indeed. Of course, if he takes to drinking, I need not hope for things to mend with him."

"No sir, they will never!"

"It is an ugly piece of business. I do detest putting a poor woman out of house and home."

"Any other landlord, sir, would have done it two months ago."

"There is no doubt of that."

"You have allowed them to live there, rent free, nearly all winter. What else should they ask of you? to keep them in shelter all their lives, gratis?"

"True, true, I have been very easy with them, I know."

"You have shown them more kindness than they have any right to expect from you."

"Of course, they have no claim on me."

"Now, sir," said Jabez, "I want to rent that same old building, for my own use, and if I can have it on the first day of the next month, I will pay you for it five dollars per month. If I cannot have it, I must move immediately."

"You shall have it."

The satisfied tenant then took his departure in peace; for he saw that his threat to move was a very moving argument in his favor.

The landlord was far from enjoying the same degree of self-complacence on the subject. He was not a cruel man, naturally, and he disliked very much, to put the force of the law on any of his poor tenants; much more so, when the tenant was a feeble woman. Yet, there was

before the eye of his mind that evil monster, known among men by the deceptive name of self-interest; and that powerful monster was alluring him by holding before his eyes the enticing sum of five dollars per month, in lieu of a blank. And he, for the sake of that paltry sum, hardened his heart into the belief that it was his duty to accept the offer of self-interest, no matter how disagreeable might be the result of such acceptance. Had he but remembered, it was more, far more important, "to do unto others as he would like them to do unto him," than anything could be which would cause him to break this golden rule, he would have realized that the sum of five dollars per month was not such a mighty large sum as it seemed to be while offered by a false and delusive love of pecuniary gain.

At the beginning of April, Minnie's household goods and chattels were seized by a duly authorized officer, and placed, by his orders, on the street pavement, in front of the house.

When the work was all done, the officer locked the doors, and took the keys away with him. Biddy made Minnie and her little children go into her room, and there they were sitting, in great bewilderment of mind and

body, when Olimond came to his dinner. The poor boy was much shocked, but he did the best he could to try to cheer his mother; and he told her he would try to obtain leave of absence from work, that afternoon, and endeavor to find her a place of shelter somewhere, before night.

Biddy made him sit down and eat a good dinner which she had prepared for him. Isabel was absent from home, trying the endurability of her third place, and therefore, fortunately, she was not a sharer in this new misfortune.

When Olimond asked Mr. Loydem, his employer, for leave of absence from work, that afternoon, he said to him—

"Why, Olimond, what's in your head to make you so unreasonable? You know how much hurried we are just now."

"Yes sir, I know it. But my mother has been put out of doors by our landlord; she is not well enough to run about to hunt another place, and I want to do it for her before night, if I can; our goods are all standing out on the front pavement, sir."

"What made the landlord put her out?"

"I believe it was for back rent. We have had a great deal of sickness at our house the

past few months, and she could not collect money for the payment of the rent."

After a few moments' silence, Mr. Loydem said:—

"Some time ago, I bought a lot of ground, out near our Sister Mary's house, because it was very cheap. There is an old frame building on it, in which your mother may live, rent free, until she can get herself better suited, if you and she will think it is good enough for you."

"O, sir," said Olimond, "I am so thankful to you! any place with a roof over it will be good enough. May I go tell my mother about it?"

"No, you go to work. I will send her a message by the errand boy."

Olimond then went to work with a brightened heart. The heavy burden of care being thus unexpectedly removed from his mind, made his fingers fly about very nimbly, and it was, therefore, a good half day's work which he performed that afternoon for his obliging employer. The man was already reaping the beneficial results of having acted on the golden rule principle. Never yet did any one obey that rule, without being in some way benefitted by it.

When Minnie found there was a place ready to receive her, the next question was, how she

should remove her goods to it. The old house lately purchased by Mr. Loydem was a long way off, at the upper end of Francisville. No furniture car would take a load there for less than a dollar and a half; and she had not a dollar in the world. In this perplexing difficulty, Biddy came to the rescue, by offering to pay for the removal of the goods. Biddy strongly suspected the part Jabez had acted in causing Minnie's ejectment, and she resolved to make his purse suffer for it. When the goods were all packed in the furniture car, Biddy took Minnie and her children as near to their new home as she could, in an omnibus, the cost of which she also paid. When they arrived at it, Biddy remained with them until a late hour in the evening, helping to arrange the furniture in proper order.

After that, Olimond was obliged to carry his dinner with him, and eat it in the workshop. This was unfortunate for him, as it threw him much more frequently in the company of Bob Blazenbill.

Minnie was much pleased with her new situation; she was within view of the open fields, and it greatly cheered her to have such an extended prospect ever before her eyes. The air around

her new place of abode was pure and fresh, clear and bracing, compared to any other she had breathed since her departure from her well beloved Silveryville.

The house she now occupied, was a two storied, old, yellow frame, with three rooms on a floor. It had a pleasant little garden in front, in which were growing two noble, old poplar trees; around the flower beds, in the garden, there were low borders of boxwood. In the rear of the house there was a very extensive yard. In it were growing several gnarled, knotty, old cherry and plum trees.

As the Spring opened, the warm weather increased and the days lengthened, Minnie was delighted to sit, with her work, at the front door, beneath the shade of the poplar trees, while her children sported and played in the back yard. Here, Frank and Merton were sent to the public school. In this remote neighborhood, it was not as fully crowded as in others, by the children of the rich people. Rose was still too young to be entered.

A few weeks after Minnie was snugly fixed in the old yellow frame house, Isabel returned home from her fourth or fifth place, which she could not endure, on account of the large num-

ber of young children with which it abounded. She now resolved she would not try hiring out again, but learn some other trade, by which she might be able to support herself, and aid her mother, if she could conveniently.

First, she tried gaiter binding; then silver ware polishing; then match-box making; when she had learned five different kinds of manual labor, she made out to earn a little something at one or another of them, whenever she was in urgent need of some article of clothing, which she could not obtain without money earned by her own hands. Olimond and his mother had as much as they could do, in supplying the other wants of the family, among which had to be included, the greatest part of the time, Isabel's boarding; for she never earned enough to feel it convenient to aid her mother in furnishing the table expenses.

Now and then, when Olimond's dinner happened to be more than usually dry, he was induced to accept Bob Blazenbill's oft-repeated offers of something to drink. This drink was most frequently accepted, when offered in the form of foaming beer or frothy porter, than when made in smaller quantities, of something stronger. Yet, on the whole, Olimond's progress towards

becoming what Bob felt it would be delightful to see him—a regular tippler—was very slow. Bob often thought to himself, that he was the hardest case to win over entirely and openly on the side of old King Alcohol, that he had ever yet taken in hand. Such cases were far from being like good angels' visits—

"Few and far between"—

but like fiends' prowlings, around the bright and beautiful spots of earth, they were thick and innumerable. Strange, marvellously strange it is, that a human being can be so perverted in his feelings and in his nature, as to become the destroyer of his fellow creatures! Yet, how many such do we see, especially among those who have enrolled their names, their passions, and their destinies, and their laborious services under the fiery and blood-sprinkled banners of the old and destructive god, Bacchus!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A CALM.

Two years passed away, and Minnie, during their passage over her, enjoyed an unwonted space of comparative domestic peace and tranquillity. She was not visited by any violent attacks of sickness.

Death, with his ghastly visage, had not intruded his unwelcome presence within the limits of her much reduced family circle. More than ten times the crushing hoofs of his pale charger, in bygone years, had trampled down beneath them the beloved forms of those who were near and dear to her heart's best affections. Dreadingly apprehensive had she become of another visit from him. But these two years, he neither came, nor sent a shadow of his fearful approach near her, in the form of prostrate sickness.

Her main anxiety now, was caused by Isabel's continued unsteadiness at any kind of occupation. For herself, she found an abundant supply of plain sewing; and as they were still

living rent free, her own earnings, added to Olimond's, kept them from any kind of pecuniary suffering. Olimond was still the favorite of his employers, and they had lately told him, that on the beginning of the next year, they intended to increase his wages very largely.

Thus, two years passed away. They were the two most peaceful years Minnie had known since the death of good Mr. Emgreen. They were a pleasant rest on her weary way along the path of life. Her Heavenly Father had before them, in love and mercy, smitten her very sorely, to wean her affections from the delusive things and scenes of earth, that she might turn from them in her dark trials, towards Him, for strength and help in her adversity. But in vain was all His smiting; she would not, did not, recognise His hand in the events of her life, and therefore, it was, perhaps, that He was now trying to win her love and obedience to His Holy laws, by giving her a rest, a calm, a peace, which she greatly needed, after all the storms of affliction she had encountered.

Her health was now vastly improved. But her present blessings were all in vain, to win her to her Father's love. The Bible, formerly Mr. Emgreen's, which she had saved from the

wreck of her Silveryville home—that venerable, old family Bible, in which he had so often read, was carefully encased in a green cloth cover, and placed on the best table, in the best room of her humble home. It was, to Minnie, a revered object; revered because it had been loved, and studied, and devoutly prized by its former owner; but, in itself—in its contents, and their relation to eternity—it was, to her, most sadly, truly, an object of utter indifference.

What a fearful state of being is that of an unpraying and un-Bible reading mother! Alas! where can *she* go for comfort and for guidance, if she will not open her Heaven-inspired volume, and if she will not humble herself in prayer, before the throne of Heavenly Grace? Ah! there is little in this life of trial to cheer and console such an one, even under the most favored circumstances. How very, very sad, then, must be her heart's experience, when she is called to walk through life in the stony and thorny pathways of poverty!

Poverty, how many rankling, writhing, wrathful evils are thine, which can be known only by actual experience! These evils cannot be cheered or sweetened, except by religion, and by an ever abiding faith and trust in the Good-

ness and Wisdom of an Omnipotent Creator and Ruler of the Universe.

Isabel was now tall for her age, and as usual with children who are reared in toil and poverty, she was prematurely advanced and independent in mind, far beyond her years. She fancied she was quite capable of judging right from wrong, and believed herself to be old enough to be the mistress of her own actions. Then, under the influence of these fancies, she openly received the visits of Patrick Franinigen, in defiance of her mother's expressed wishes to the contrary.

They both knew how disagreeable he was to Olimond, and his mother dreaded his meeting him in the house. But Isabel was obstinate, and would not yield her wishes to her mother's. The only answer she ever gave her on the subject, was to the effect that Olimond had no reason for disliking Patrick; that she liked him, and was resolved to receive his visits, whether Olimond was pleased with them or not.

Alas, for poor Minnie! her two years of comparative calm and peace were now ended, and she was troubled by an unexpected and unanticipated state of affairs. One Sunday evening, Olimond returned from his usual long Sunday

walk in the country, while Patrick was sitting in the front room surrounded by the other members of the family.

Minnie trembled with fear and dread when she saw him approach the house; but Olimond was tired, and passed through the room without speaking to or seeming to notice any person in it. He immediately went to his own room, and in a few minutes was fast asleep.

Patrick stayed very late that night; much later than Minnie wished to have him remain. After he was gone, she told Isabel, if he did not keep better hours in future she would have to forbid his coming to the house. These words irritated the feelings of the wilful daughter, and she made answers to them that greatly wounded the feelings of the unfortunate mother.

The next evening, at the supper-table, one of the other children said, laughingly, to Olimond—

"What do you think, Olly, our Izzy had a beau last night, and you did not stop to look at him as you went through the room."

"No," said Olimond; "I was too tired to look at any body when I came in."

"How fine he was dressed up! you ought to have looked at him," said little Rose; "he was

so much afraid I would hurt his new clothes, that he would not let me come near him."

"I don't see how he could keep you off, you have such a fashion of lolling on every person that comes in the house."

"He didn't let me come within three feet of him; he kept twirling and twisting his long, black cane around him so hard, all the time I was in the room, that I kept far enough from him, I tell you I did."

"What is his name? If he is such a grand dandy as you make him out, I suppose I must speak to him the next time I meet him here."

Minnie now tried hard to change the subject, and to divert Olimond's attention to some other one. But it was too late. He was interested in all he could hear about "Izzy's" visitor, and insisted on knowing his name.

"His name," said Isabel, very pertly, "is Patrick Franinigen; and he is very much improved; you would not have known him if you had looked at him ever so much."

Olimond then jumped up, and walking fiercely, near to Isabel, he said, violently—

"You don't dare tell me you are keeping the company of that young villain, do you?"

"He is not a villain; he is a decent, young

mechanic, and I will keep his company whenever I can, say and do what you please about him."

Olimond then turned towards his mother, and said, very passionately—

"See here, mother, if that abominable young Pat ever again puts his foot in this house, with your consent, I will leave it for ever. Remember—remember well what I say; do you hear, are you listening to *me*, mother?"

"Yes, yes, Olimond, I hear you."

"I say, the very day I meet that villainous young Pat here, with your consent, I will instantly go to the wharf, and ship myself off on a whaling voyage."

Olimond then went to bed. Minnie told Isabel that, for the present, Olimond's will must be the law of the house, and that Patrick Franinigen must not enter it.

Isabel cried very bitterly, and said many impertinent things to her mother, then went to her rest. While the children all slept, the mother toiled at her needle the greater part of the entire night; anxiety of mind banished sleep from her eyelids, and she endeavored to drive away mental care by the activity of her hands.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A BRIDAL CALL.

The next morning, Olimond had eaten his breakfast and left the house, before Isabel came down stairs. That day, at noon, although his dinner was not by any means a dry one—it consisted of one bowl full of rich soup, and another of boiled rice and milk—not dry fare, that; quite the contrary; yet he accepted Bob's invitation to take a drink, and after he had emptied the glass, he allowed it to be refilled.

He felt troubled in his mind about his sister's choice of company, and he foolishly fancied that a double drink would wash away the trouble.

Alas, how many poor, erring mortals possess the same maddening fancy, and thereby only add fuel to the flames of their real or imagined affliction!

A few evenings after that, Patrick was seen approaching the house, a little while before the time of Olimond's usual return home. Isabel met him at the gate, said a few words to him,

then returned alone to the house; and as she was hurriedly putting on her bonnet and shawl, she said to her mother—

"I am going out to take a walk; good-bye."

She then left the house, joined Patrick, who was waiting for her at the gate, and they walked away together, in a contrary direction from the one of Olimond's return home. When this occurred, the other children were enjoying a merry game behind the house, and did not see it.

Isabel was so often absent from home, that her being so that evening was not particularly noticed by Olimond, and he retired to rest without asking any questions about her. After he and the other children were all asleep, Minnie sat in her front room, down stairs, with her sewing in her hands, listening to every sound that could be heard in the quiet neighborhood.

She was fearing that Patrick would come home with Isabel. She sat and watched, sewed, listened, feared and trembled, until ten o'clock struck; then did the same until the hours of eleven and twelve were tolled from the bell of the public hall. She then threw her work over her head, walked to the front gate, and gazed anxiously up and down the silent street, but not

a living, moving creature could she see in any direction.

The moon was full, and it beamed brightly from an unclouded sky upon the sleeping town, with a light so steady, so brilliant, so beautiful, that distant objects were almost as distinctly visible as if gleaming in the glare of a morning sun.

"O, Isabel! Isabel! where are you?"

But no Isabel answered the anxious mother's question. Minnie then left the back door unfastened, and went to bed. Fatigue at last conquered her apprehensive sorrow, and she sank into a heavy sleep from which she did not awaken until it was time to prepare Olimond's early breakfast, and the dinner which he was to take with him to his workshop.

The sorrowing mother dared not communicate to Olimond the fears which were lacerating her own inward heart. The first thing she did, even before she was dressed, was to look into Isabel's bed, hoping to find her in it. But no; it was as she had left it the preceding day.

All day and the following evening, Minnie watched for the return of Isabel; but no Isabel made her appearance.

That night, before retiring to rest, Minnie

examined Isabel's trunk, closet and boxes. She found they were all empty, with the exception of a few worn out, useless articles. Minnie then felt assured that Isabel must be gone to some place at which she expected to remain longer than she had ever done at any other since she had left Mrs. Loons.

"What should she do? Raise the alarm? Tell Olimond about her mysterious absence, and have him hunt her up?

To do so, she would have to acknowledge that she left the house in Patrick's company. The consequences might be most fearful. No, she must not, she concluded, say one word about it to Olimond. The only way she could keep him ignorant of the affair, was to keep it all a secret, shut up quietly in her own mind. How hard it was to keep it there, smothered and stifled in her own agonized heart.

"Why, mother," said Rose, "what does ail you? are you sick, my own dear moddy?"

Poor, little Rose did all she could to comfort her "dear, dear moddy," and that mother, for her sake, and for the sake of her brothers, *dared* not lie there and weep any longer. She must up and toil for their welfare and benefit; toil on with the burden of her sorrow, and in-

dulge not in the luxury of spending her time in tears. All such indulgence must be left to the unshared possession of the rich and wealthy; the poor have no right to spend or waste their precious time in weepings or wailings. They must be left to the great and affluent of the world, who can afford to be idle, and therefore are able to weep at their leisure.

One evening, while they were all sitting around the table, after having eaten their supper, with the remains still on the table, Isabel and Patrick suddenly walked into the middle of the room, and with a low, derisive curtsy, Isabel said:—

"Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you my husband, and his happy young wife, Mrs. Patrick Franinigen. Now, Master Olimond, what do you say to that?"

"Why, I say, if he does not leave the house this minute, I will make him."

As he said these words, he seized the sharp bread knife, that was lying near the loaf of bread, and sprang towards Patrick, with a blazing face and set teeth. The happy young wife and her new husband were not slow in leaving behind them the unclosed doors and open gate of Minnie's house.

Olimond was quivering with anger, as he said—

"To think she should throw herself away on that young scamp!"

"Well," said his mother, "if they are married, there is no help for it, and we must make the best we can of it and of him."

"No, I will not make the best of it; its impossible to make even good of it, much less the best. Mother, did you know they were going to be married?"

"No, no, Olimond, I never heard a word about it. May be, after all, they are not married. Perhaps she only said they were, to tease you."

"I wish that was all. But, mother, even if they are not married, she is keeping his company, and that is disgraceful enough."

Olimond then sought his pillow. He was physically so much fatigued by his day's toil, that he was not kept awake by his mental excitement. He soon slept the sound sleep of youth and weariness. The next morning, as he was eating his breakfast, he said:—

"I wish, mother, you would find out to-day whether or not Isabel is really married."

"I will try to."

Olimond went to his work, faintly cheered by the hope that his sister was not married.

As soon as the little boys were sent to school, Minnie and Rose started out to make inquiries after Isabel. Minnie knew where to go, as Patrick's parents had never moved from their old home in Wood street.

When they entered their house, the first thing they saw was Isabel, working very industriously at a sewing machine.

"Isabel," said Minnie, "are you living here?"

"Yes, mother; where else should I live, but with my husband's parents, since Olimond will not allow me to bring him to your house?"

"Isabel, are you really married?"

The answer to this question, was the display of a highly ornamented marriage certificate.

Minnie read it, returned it to the owner, then said:—

"Why did you not ask my consent?"

"Because I knew you would not give it."

"How long do you expect to live here?"

"Until Patrick is of age, which he will be in about fourteen months. After that, he will receive higher wages; then we will go to housekeeping."

"Does he pay your boarding?"

"No, ma'am; he could not afford to do that and dress us both, the way he wants to." He pays his own boarding, and I pay mine."

"How do you manage to do that?"

"This way. His mother owns this sewing machine; she has taught me how to use it, and I can now easily earn enough by working on it to pay her my boarding. It is so much nicer than sewing by hand, that I like it very much."

"Then you are contented and happy, are you?"

"O, yes, mother, very happy! Patrick is a very good husband. There is no reason in the world why Olimond should dislike him."

"I hope your happiness will last. But, Isabel, for the present, Patrick must not come to see us; he must wait until Olimond becomes better reconciled to him."

"What is the use of caring for him?"

"I tell you, Isabel, we must! he is my main stay. If he should go to sea, we would have to go to the poor house. My needle would never earn enough to support us all."

"If Patrick cannot come to see you, I don't want to come either."

"You may change your mind about that; and

if you do, I hope you will come when Olimond is not at home."

The mother then took her departure towards her own home, to prepare the noontide meal for her little children. When Olimond came home to his supper and heard the result of her morning's inquiries, he looked very angry, but did not say much. He reserved his words for an other occasion.

The next day was Saturday, and Minnie was hurrying to finish the last article of her week's work, that she might have it taken home before dark. She was very anxious to receive the money for it, as she wanted to buy several articles that she and her children greatly needed.

When, at last, it was done, she left the house. in the care of the two little boys, and, with the work on her arm, and Rose at her side, walked towards the dwelling-place of her customer. As they went along, Rose said, very coaxingly—

"Mamma, will you not buy me a new comb when you get paid for your sewing?"

"I will, Rose, if I have money enough left after I buy new shoes for your brothers."

The child sighed, as she remembered all the many promises that had failed to bring for her the long-wished for long-comb, to keep her

hair from falling over her eyes. Then she said—

"I do wish Frank and Merton would not wear out so many shoes. Mamma, you buy new shoes for those boys every week, don't you?"

"O, no Rose! not quite that often."

"Well, if I ever do get that comb, I will be so glad, I will be afraid to look at it, for fear of breaking it."

"You will get it one of these days."

When they reached the house of the owner of the week's work, they found she had gone out. She was not expected home until the following Monday morning. Before she went, she knew very well Minnie would bring the work home, but she did not leave the money for it, because she would not pay for it until she examined it very carefully, with her own hands and eyes. Minnie and Rose were both sadly disappointed.

CHAPTER XXX.

OLD BOB'S SUCCESS.

Minnie felt her disappointment all the more keenly, when she examined the state of her larder. There was not bread enough in the house for supper. There was but one very small drawing of tea, and only half as much sugar as they used at one meal; only oil enough in the lamp for one night, and not a mite of flour, or butter, or meat, or one cent of money in the house. After Minnie had made these examinations, and placed the table and fire in readiness for supper, she sat at the front door and watched for the return of Olimond. She had some mending to be done, before she could say her week's work was completed. But she was weary and did not feel like sewing, and she concluded to rest until after supper. So she sat and rested, and waited for Olimond. Rose had forgotten her disappointment in a merry game of tag, with her two little brothers; they played, and Minnie rested, until the grey twi-

light had settled away in the gloom and darkness of night, until the stars shone thickly and brightly over head—until the clock struck nine. Then the children became weary of their play, and wanted their supper. Too hungry and sleepy to wait for anything better, they ate their dry bread, drank their half sweetened tea, and then, very soon, were silently living in the land of dreams.

Minnie cleared away their cups and saucers, re-set the table with empty plates and empty sugar bowl for herself and Olimond, and then went to her mending. By half-past ten o'clock it was all done; but still no Olimond was within sight or hearing. At eleven o'clock the stores would close, and then they would be without food until Monday. Minnie was already suffering dreadfully for the want of it. What could she do? There was not a neighbor near her of whom she dared ask a favor.

Had her needle work employer then seen her haggard misery, and her agony of mind and body, would she not have wished she had left her the money she owed her?

Minnie then grew desperate. She hastily flung a sun-bonnet on her head, and a basket on her arm, and went to the nearest provision

shop, where she asked for credit until Monday. The man, after some hesitation, granted her request, and she procured sufficient food to last until Monday.

The next morning, when Rose was dressed in her clean, Sunday clothes, and her hair was smoothly brushed behind her ears, she sighed, and said—

"Now, I wish I had my new long-comb, to keep my hair out of my eyes and behind my ears."

"I wish we had our new shoes, to wear to school to-morrow," said Frank, "but I must say, as badly as I want them, I would be willing to go without them a week longer, for the sake of getting Rose her long-a-coming long-comb."

"I declare, I would, too!" said Merton; she will never drop that never-ending long-comb from her mouth, until some body puts it on the top of her head."

"We will never hear the last of it, I am afraid," said Frank.

At twelve o'clock the front gate was opened, then shut with a loud bang. Minnie and her children all ran to the front door. O, the terrifying sight which met their gaze and struck them dumb with fear and amazement. The

figure which came staggering and tottering up the garden walk was Olimond's, but not his own sturdy and upright form; it was Olimond's, blighted, bended and disguised under the baneful influences of liquor.

He passed his terror-struck family without seeming to see them, and went to his bed, where he remained the rest of the day.

At supper time he came down stairs, sat in the nearest chair, buried his face in his hands, and wept as if his heart would break. His mother said—

"Olimond, where have you been?"

"Where have I been? Go ask Isabel where I have been. She ought to know; she has driven me to destruction. Mother, my whole week's wages have been stolen from me."

On the previous Saturday evening, when Olimond made his appearance on the pavement in front of his workshop, he discovered Bob Blazenbill standing there.

"Olimond, my man," he said, "wouldn't you like to go to a free concert to-night?"

Olimond's heart was heavy, and the idea of going to a concert, without having to pay for it, sounded as if it would cheer his mind. His answer to old Bob was—

"Yes, I would."

They walked down the street together to a large drinking saloon. It was brilliantly lighted with gas, and adorned by many showy pictures, and large mirrors, in broad gilt frames.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FREE CONCERT—THE LONG-COMB.

When Olimond entered this brilliant apartment, he felt as if he was in a place of enchantment. He had never seen such a magnificent scene. As soon as they were fairly seated at one of the small, marble tables, Bob treated Olimond to a large plate of fried oysters, and a foaming glass of porter. At about nine o'clock, the music, and the most deeply interested hearers, adjourned to an upper room, in the rear of the establishment. Soon afterwards, a new feature was given to the fascinating scene; for such it seemed to the deluded eyes of Olimond.

The door of this upper saloon suddenly opened, and six or eight handsomely dressed young girls entered and walked around the room.

As they walked, they boldly and smilingly asked each of the visitors—

"Will you dance with me, sir?"

Olimond was one of the number who found the question irresistible. Now, Olimond knew no more of the "poetry of motion," than he knew of the poetry of the ancient Greek and Hebrew. But he was excited by the music and by Bob's good cheer; and under their united influences, he could jump up and down, stamp his feet, make a noise on the floor, hop about after his partner wherever she led him, and doing all these, he fancied, was dancing with a right good will and grace.

In this way the greater part of the night was spent, until, finally, Olimond lost his consciousness, and did not recover it entirely, until supper time on Sunday evening; when he did then recover it, he found his pockets empty, and his head full of aches, his heart full of sorrow, and his eyes of bitter, bitter tears.

On the next Saturday morning, Minnie was surprised by a call from Isabel. She was already homesick, and wished to take a peep at Rose and her mother. She brought several little presents for her mother and brothers. Had she brought a loaf of bread, some tea and

sugar, how acceptable they would have been! But not more so than was the welcome gift which she bestowed on little Rose. It was neither more nor less than a long, black, gutta percha comb. At last, Rose really had her new long-comb on her head, and most beautifully it fitted there. Many and loud were the joyful exclamations over that delightful comb.

Isabel's visit was short. The last words she said, on her departure, were—

"Good-bye, Rose, take good care of your pretty, new comb."

"That I will," she said, as she smiled very brightly, and looked as happy as if her head was decorated with a jeweled diadem, instead of a simple, new comb.

That night, when Olimond entered the house, Rose, in her joyous delight, forgot his ill feelings towards Isabel, and ran to him, with the exclamation—

"See here, Olimond, what a dear, nice, new comb Izzy has given me!"

He suddenly tore the comb from her head, twisted it tightly around his strong, hard fingers, until it broke into a dozen pieces; he flung them to the middle of the street, then said:—

"Rose, remember, if you ever mention that

name to me again, I will put you where your comb is."

Poor Rose! she stole away to one of the upper rooms and sobbed herself to sleep.

Olimond's violence frightened their appetite from all the family, and the meal was a sorry affair in every respect.

During several succeeding weeks, Olimond did his regular daily work, but he did not earn any extra wages by doing over work at night. Minnie toiled all the harder at her needle on that account.

Why was this new misfortune, in the shape of Olimond's failing industry, now hanging its darkening weight over the sorrowing hearts of his dependent family?

It was because the demon intemperance was allowed to range freely up and down, and through every corner of our social life.

No one ever fell into the habit of drinking to excess, without the example and enticement of some other stronger and higher influence than his own wishes. And as the victims never enter alone on the fatal path of the drunkard's career, so, alas! they never walk *alone* therein. Their sufferings, disgrace, poverty, shame, sorrow, and all, save their guilt, must be shared by their relations.

About this time, Bob Blazenbill re-appeared in the workshop of his relations. In the evening he asked Olimond to take a drink; his drink was accepted. The vile tempter then thought he was sure of his victim. On the next Saturday evening, after Olimond had received his week's wages, Bob met him on the street, and said to him—

"Come along, down street, to the free concert?"

Olimond clinched his fist, and shook it fiercely so near the most prominent feature in Bob's face, that the man was frightened and did not dare repeat the question. But, by this time, Olimond was beginning to love the taste of "fire-water," and although he would not trust himself to go with Bob to the free concert, he could not resist the desire he felt to refresh himself with a glass of punch. As he walked towards home he felt chilly, for it was now the latter part of October; he stopped at a tavern, and drank a large glass of hot whiskey punch. In this way Olimond began spending a large proportion of his wages. Very soon he formed the habit of giving his mother only a part of his earnings.

When Olimond was done his supper, one evening, he went to his own room, and to bed

his mother thought; but, instead of retiring to rest, he was intending to go out and labor for the "Wages of sin, which is death." When he reached his room, instead of undressing, he attired himself in the clean garments his mother had put there for his Sunday use, and made such improvements as he could afford, in his personal appearance, and then walked quietly down stairs and out of the back door. It was nearly ten o'clock when he reached the free concert. He and his companions revelled and danced until three o'clock in the morning. Olimond was careful not to drink excessively, as he did not want to become insensible; but at that hour he did, most decidedly, lose all consciousness, and remained in that state until near noon the next day, at which time he found himself walking the street near his own gate. He must have been drugged to be robbed of his week's wages. After that he became a frequent visitor to free concerts in other places, and he began to earn less and less wages every week.

One Saturday night he did not come home at all; and Minnie was obliged to supply the wants of the family the best way she could with her own earnings. Sunday went, and then came

Monday, and every other day of the week; but Olimond did not return to his home. His mother was in great distress about his unwonted absence.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DISMISSED—MRS. JAY'S BENEVOLENCE.

While Minnie was suffering in grief over the mysterious absence of her son Olimond, he was in comparative ease and comfort, serving out his term of "thirty days below," in the county prison.

He had been to a free concert, as usual, on the previous Saturday night. He and one of the other revellers there, had engaged in a quarrel; the noise they made, caused the arrest of the whole company, and they were all sent to prison. As they made some pretensions to be decent people, they did not give their own names, but were committed under false ones.

When Olimond was liberated, and returned to his place in the workshop, he was told that

another hand filled it, and he was dismissed from the establishment.

All this time the family depended on the earnings of Minnie's needle, which scarcely sufficed to keep them in food and fuel; she could not buy one single article of clothing. She was in daily dread of having her sons dismissed from school, on account of the state of their apparel. One day she went to see Biddy, and described to her the hard time she was having.

When she was done, Biddy said—

"Never you mind, my poor friend, I will see if I can't do something for ye before ye're a week older."

Biddy had a cousin, now living with a certain lady, named Mrs. Jay, who was wealthy and very actively benevolent. To this lady Biddy went and presented Minnie's case. Before the day closed Minnie received a ton of coal and a barrel of flour.

What mines of wealth, and joy, and comfort they seemed to the grateful heart of Minnie Malvers. Their treasures appeared to be inexhaustible; and yet, they were purchased with no greater amount of money than is often spent for the trimming of a dress, or for some useless gewgaw of adornment for the person or the

parlor. The donations were certainly liberal, useful, and O, how acceptable! But still, they did not satisfy their generous giver. That evening Mrs. Jay drove to Minnie's door, in her carriage, and inquired kindly into the nature and extent of her most pressing necessities. She came in the evening, on purpose to find all the family at home. Mrs. Jay procured from Minnie the measure of all her sons, and herself and Rose, for full suits of clothes. Before she left, she said:—

"Would you not be more comfortable if you had a new stove? yours appears to be very much worn out."

"O, yes, ma'am!" said Minnie; it is ready to fall to pieces, but I cannot afford to buy a new one."

The next morning a porter brought Minnie a new stove, and a large basket filled with groceries and provisions, with Mrs. Jay's compliments.

Minnie began to fancy that Mrs. Jay must be more than human; that she was an angel sent from the higher regions to earth, for a brief period, that we might see what lovely beings the angels are. That evening, Mrs. Jay repeated her call on Minnie, and brought with her

a large bundle of comfortable, new clothing for herself and children.

Minnie, by Mrs. Jay's advice, put her boys in stores where they each earned a trifle.

Winter, with its long, windy storms of snow, sleet and piercing cold, at length gave place to sunny, cheerful, smiling Spring; and then, one day, when all nature seemed awakening to a joyful brightness, Mr. Loydem called on Minnie and told her she must move by the end of the week, as he had engaged workmen to tear down the old yellow frame. At the end of the week, the old yellow frame was empty and deserted.

Olimond, now seeing they again had rent to pay, exerted himself a little more to keep regularly at work, in order to help pay it; but, by this time, "the worm of the still" within him was stronger than his wishes, and he did not succeed in earning half enough to quench its insatiable demands.

It was August; the weather was stifling warm anywhere; but much more so in the third story of the small house in which Minnie was staying. Minnie was miserable in health, and out of work; her customers were out of town. Olimond ate at her table, but assisted not in fur-

nishing it. Merton was sick in bed with bilious fever. Frank was earning one dollar and fifty cents per week, and his wages was all they had to support the family.

When the month expired, and her rent became due, all the money she had in the world, was one dollar. She gave that to the landlord, and told him that, on account of her own and her son's sickness, she had not been able to get more. When he took it, he said to her, very firmly—

"Remember, if you do not pay me the next month's rent in full, I will put you out. If you are too poor to pay rent, why don't you go to the poor house?"

Time passed away, and things went on the same. Merton remained sick, Olimond idle, and Minnie's customers were still absent. The next month was drawing to its close, and Minnie was unprepared to pay the rent. In her trouble, she went to Biddy, and asked her advice about applying to Mrs. Jay for relief.

"Indade," said Biddy, "its sorry I am for ye. But Mrs. Jay has shut up her house and gone to Europe."

It was four o'clock in the afternoon. Biddy was sewing in her front room, and listening to

Minnie's lamentations over Mrs. Jay's absence, when they were disturbed by a knock at the front door. When Biddy opened it, she saw that good Mrs. Bridd had once more turned up, alive and well, in Philadelphia.

As soon as she was comfortably seated, she said:—

"And why did you never answer any of my letters?"

"We never received any letters from you!" they both exclaimed at once.

"I wrote to you both, two or three times, and directed them to this house; it is very strange you did not receive them."

Mrs. Bridd then informed her friends she was on the look out for a house, and wanted Minnie to take rooms with her. In the course of a few days, Mrs. Bridd found a house to suit her, and she and Minnie moved into it. Very soon, they were all nicely fixed. After the removal, Merton recovered his health very rapidly, and was, by the middle of October, able to return to his situation in the store. Minnie's customers also came home, and they were once more getting along comfortably.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

NEW RELATIONS—OLIMOND'S DEPARTURE.

Mrs. Bridd had not brought her furniture with her from the country, but had sold it there, and intended to buy new things, a few at a time.

One day she had been out on the business of buying furniture. When she came home she looked as if she was running over with good news, and did not know how to tell them fast enough.

"Mrs. Malvers," she said, "did you not tell me that your real mother's name is Tendem, and that she lives in B—— county?"

"Yes," said Minnie; "that is her name, and that is the name of her county."

Mrs. Bridd then clapped her hands, and said—

"I thought so! I thought so!"

"What of it?"

"Why, Mrs. Malvers, my child, I have found your mother."

"My mother?"

How strangely the words sounded to Minnie, when she knew that all the mother she ever remembered, was resting many long, weary years in the grave!

After a little while, a furniture car drove to the door, and in it sat a person with a looking-glass in his hands. Of him Mrs. Bridd had bought the furniture; and she told Minnie his name was Mr. Tendem. When he entered the house, Mrs. Bridd introduced to him his sister, Mrs. Minnie Malvers.

He eyed Minnie very sharply, then said:—

"My mother told me, once, that I had a half sister living somewhere in the country, but her name, she said, was Emgreen; she never said she had a daughter in Philadelphia."

"But," said Mrs. Bridd, "this is Minnie Emgreen that was; she used to live in Silveryville; but she married a Mr. Malvers, then moved to this city."

"Well," said Mr. Tendem, "I don't know much about it. I expect mother will pay me a visit next Christmas; when she comes, I will tell her about it."

After saying this, he suddenly took his departure from the house. Minnie laughed, and said to Mrs. Bridd—

"You see, poor relations are not welcome customers in any trade."

Mrs. Bridd was out of patience with the man, and resolved she would not buy any more furniture from him.

Minnie and Mrs. Bridd were getting along very comfortably together. Minnie's cough still troubled her a good deal, yet she kept up and sewed very steadily, and had plenty of work. Frank and Merton's salaries were increased. Rose was a scholar in the public school, and was learning very fast; and still she found time on Saturdays, and in the weekday evenings, to help her mother with her work; she bid fair to become a very skilful sewer. If Olimond had done his duty, they all would have been very happy. But he did not; on the contrary, he was a source of much sorrow to all his family, as well as to their kind friend, Mrs. Bridd. His conduct was sometimes so violent, that they trembled with fear whenever he came in the house.

Thus they passed the time, until a few days before Christmas; they were then surprised by a visit from Mr. Tendem, the furniture dealer. He was accompanied by a neatly dressed, and ruddy, middle-aged lady, whom he introduced as

his mother. This lady immediately asked Minnie a long string of questions. After listening very attentively to her answers, she turned towards her son, and said:—

"Yes, Thomas, this is my daughter, sure enough. She is my long lost Minnie. You need not wait for me, Thomas, I am going to spend the day with Minnie. Please to call for me early this evening, my son."

Mr. Tendem then left for his own home.

Mrs. Bridd was present, and she could not help thinking that Mrs. Tendem looked more like being the daughter than the mother of Mrs. Malvers.

Mrs. Tendem made herself very agreeable to both Minnie and Mrs. Bridd. She informed them that she was a widow; her children were all settled in life, and doing well; that she owned a small house and lot in B—— county, and that her occupation was nursing the sick, at which she made a comfortable living. She added to all this, an invitation to Minnie to go and live with her in B—— county.

"I could not do that," said Minnie; "I could not think of leaving my children."

"Of course, you could not," said Mrs. Tendem; "but you can bring them with you."

"No ma'am," said Minnie, "that would not be fair; they would turn you out of doors; I have four—three boys and one girl—living with me."

"Well four are not so very many; I could make plenty of room for them."

"No, no," said Minnie; "they would be too much trouble; I will stay here until they are grown up, if I live that long, and then I will come and pay you a long, long visit."

It was the middle of January. Mrs. Tendem had paid her annual visit to Philadelphia, and returned to her solitary home in B—— county. There had been three weeks of severely cold weather. The Schuylkill, and the ponds which at that time abounded in the vicinity of the river, were tightly bound in the glittering fetters of ice. But there was now a sudden thaw, and a foggy, drizzling rain; such a thaw and rain as almost invariably visit Philadelphia every January. It was a Saturday night—dark, damp and dismal. Olimond had attended a carousal in the neighborhood of Fairmount. As usual, on all similar occasions, he imbibed very freely his favorite beverages. When he went out in the evening, the ponds in the open lots which lay on his road were frozen, and he crossed them in safety; but, at two or

three o'clock on the next morning, when he attempted to return home, on the same road, the ice was softened by the sudden thaw; it broke under him, his feet became entangled in the broken ice, and he fell, face downwards; he was stunned by his fall, or stupefied by the liquor he had swallowed, until he was unable to release himself from the ice. There he remained lying, face-deep in the icy water, until he was drowned—drowned, dead—dead beyond all recovery; drowned, although his body was not more than half covered with water.

There he lay, a stiffened, bloated, drowned corpse, until the beautiful beams of an unclouded Sabbath day's noontide sun played warmly and brilliantly upon his cold, cold remains. Unheeded and unnoticed, there he remained.

He was, by this time, so frequently, during days and weeks, absent from his home, that when he was thus away, his mother had ceased to worry herself about him; it was, on account of his vile and riotous conduct, rather a relief than a worriment, to know that he was not in the house.

In the afternoon, the report flew from lip to lip that the Schuylkill ice was breaking. Many of the neighbors, and the citizens generally,

wended their way, in large numbers, to see the havoc that the sun, and tide, and current were making with the crystal cakes of ice as they floated down the swollen river, or were piled in glittering heaps along its still ice-bound margins. Many of the eager sight-seers avoided crossing the vacant lots, on account of the soft state of the thick mud which now covered them, and they walked around them on the surrounding pavements. In the vicinity of Minnie's house there lived a party of half grown boys, who generally spent their Sabbath hours loitering idly about the street corners, concluding to see all the sport they could; they, too, started off to view the breaking up of the ice. These boys, like all boys, had not the least antipathy in the world to mud; on the contrary, they rather enjoyed the fun of wading through it. In their hurry to reach the river as soon as they could, they resolved to walk through the open lots.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MINNIE'S LAST DOMESTIC WOE.

When they were about half way across the lot, they discovered Olimond lying in the pond. Thinking he had just fallen, they ran to his rescue, and dragged him out of the water. They were dreadfully shocked at seeing the way in which his face was distorted. Not being much experienced in such matters, they thought he had a fit, and resolved to report his situation to the first police officer they could see.

They then left him, and continued going towards the Schuylkill. They had not proceeded far, when they overtook two "knights of the star," and to them they described the state in which they had found Olimond. They also told them his name and place of residence. The officers wrote down Olimond's name and residence; also those of the informers, then went to see what they could do for the relief of the inebriate. It did not take them long to decide that he was, and for at least ten hours had been, entirely dead.

Bob Blazenbill did not long survive his unfortunate victim. As he was one day going to the workshop of Mr. Loydem, he was seized with convulsions, and fell on the street. He was picked up by some benevolent strangers, and carried into the nearest drug store, where he was kindly attended to by the proprietor. The druggist was also an M. D., and he prescribed for him very skilfully; but his efforts to battle with the powerful disease that was holding its triumphant sway, undaunted, over its doomed victim, were all abortive. The fatal malady came off conqueror, and Bob Blazenbill, after two hours spent in hard struggles with the giant king of terrors, was forced, at last, to lay down his weapons, and ceased to breathe. His foul, polluted, whiskey-steeped carcass, more hideous than that of any dog or horse that ever died, was there stretched out, on the middle of the floor, a fit monument and trophy of the wonderful and amazing power of old King Alcohol.

Minnie recovered very slowly from the attack of sickness into which she was thrown by the shock of Olimond's sudden death.

Very early in the following June, one Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Bridd, Minnie and Rose

were sitting in their room with their sewing, talking together very agreeably. Suddenly, Mrs. Bridd looked up, and said :—

"How smoky the air is!"

Rose laughed at her, and said :—

"I don't see any smoke, Mrs. Bridd."

Minnie, also, said she did not see any smoke. But to Mrs. Bridd's vision the smoke soon became so thick, that she could not distinguish her work from her hands. She rubbed her eyes, then looked around her in bewilderment; she put away her work as well as she could, with a thick, impenetrable veil of mist before her eyes. After a few minutes' hesitation, she burst into tears, and said :—

"I am losing my sight; I am going blind."

When Minnie found how her eyes were affected, she immediately sent Rose after the doctor. He soon called; after making an examination of the m stified eyes, he prescribed such treatment as he judged they required, then he said .—

"I, above all things, recommend an immediate change of air. You had better make arrangements to pass the whole Summer in the country; while there, live as much as you can in the open air. Have made a dark-green silk

shade, and wear it over your eyes constantly; do not on any account attempt to read, sew or write. Perhaps we may be able to arrest the disease that has attacked them; but to do so, a removal to the country is indispensable."

At that minute, Minnie was seized with one of the coughing spells to which she was subject. When it was over, the doctor said to her—

"You did not ask me to prescribe for you, Mrs. Malvers; but if you would, I would tell you that you need a change of air as much as Mrs. Bridd does."

CHAPTER XXXV.

A HURRIED CHANGE.

The next day Minnie wrote to Mrs. Tendem about the doctor's advice, and requested to be informed whether it would be convenient to receive a long visit from Mrs. Bridd, Rose and herself. By return of mail, Mrs. Tendem's answer was received, in which she said—

"The sooner you all come, the better I will be pleased."

After a few days spent in hurried preparation, they departed from Philadelphia. They left Frank and Merton boarding with their sister Isabel.

At about sunset, they arrived at Mrs. Tendem's house. She was at the door ready to receive them, and conducted them at once into a room in which there was a well spread tea-table, with four chairs standing around it.

"Now," said Mrs. Tendem, "take off your bonnets, and sit down at once to your supper; you must be almost famished."

The supper was nicely prepared, and keenly relished by the weary travelers. As soon as it was concluded, Mrs. Tendem's countenance assumed a very sad expression; then she said:—

"I am very sorry, but I must now leave you to yourselves until some time to-morrow. I am going to the house of our nearest neighbor, Squire Welborn; his wife is sick, and I am nursing her. I did not write about her sickness in my letter, for fear if I did, it might prevent your coming."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SQUIRE WELBORN.

Squire Welborn had several grown up children; they were all well settled and prospered in the world, but living at considerable distances from his old homestead, so that they could not visit him very frequently. The present Mrs. Welborn was not their mother, for she was childless; but they loved and respected her very highly, and were very anxious she should recover her health.

Mr. Welborn was a kind husband, and spared neither trouble nor expense in his care of his wife. He did not apprehend any danger of losing her, but confidently hoped she would be restored to the enjoyment of renewed health.

While Mrs. Tendem was receiving the strangers, Mr. Welborn sat in his wife's room, and read to her from the "best of books." When he closed the volume, she said to him—

"Richard, I want you to *always* be good and kind to dear Mrs. Tendem. She is so attentive

to me, I feel money alone will never pay her for her faithfulness in nursing me. Will you promise to do as I desire?"

"Why, to be sure, wifey, I will promise that with all my heart; I could not help being kind to my nearest neighbor."

"I know all that; but I want you to be particularly kind and good to her for my sake."

"I promise you I will; and that as long as I live, she will have a kind and true friend."

Mrs. Welborn then composed herself to rest, as if his words had given her unspeakable comfort.

Since Mrs. Bridd's dimness of sight, Minnie had been in the habit of reading to her daily, in the Bible. Mrs. Bridd requested her to do so, because she felt that she could not do without daily hearing the words of life eternal that are therein written.

The more Minnie read, the more she became interested; and now the contents of that blessed volume were tearing from her eyes the scales of error and unbelief.

The next morning, at about ten o'clock, Mrs. Tendem came in, with her handkerchief before her eyes, and threw herself upon one of her sofas, where she wept most piteously.

"What is the matter, mother?" said Minnie.

"O, it is all over with dear Mrs. Welborn! she died about two hours ago. I was up with her all night, and now I must rest a couple of hours. Call me at twelve o'clock, but please do not speak one word to me until then."

Minnie covered her with a thin shawl, closed the shutters and doors, and left her.

The funeral took place about three days afterwards. Rose attended it with her grand-mother. Mrs. Bridd would not on account of her green shade, and Minnie would not leave her. It was largely attended, both at the house and church, five miles distant. The squire's married children, and many other relations and friends, returned with him to his house, where they remained to supper, and many of them until the next day.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONCLUSION.

Three or four days after the funeral, Mrs. Tendem returned to her own home.

In about two weeks, the newly made widower began visiting Mrs. Tendem's house; he went there regularly every afternoon, and invariably presented Rose with a bunch of handsome flowers. He seemed much pleased with Rose's quiet, modest manners.

Squire Welborn was a strong advocate of temperance; and he made it his favorite boast, that not a drop of intoxicating beverages was ever sold within a mile of his house, in any direction. On that subject he found congenial companionship, while conversing with Minnie and Mrs. Bridd.

One Saturday afternoon Mr. Welborn asked the ladies to accompany him to church the next day, in his large carriage. Mrs. Bridd thanked him, but declined going, on account of the trouble it gave her friends to get her in and out of a

carriage. Minnie would not go without Mrs. Bridd. Mrs. Tendem and Rose accepted the invitation very gratefully. On every Sunday after that they accompanied Mr. Welborn to church. Sometimes they would take their dinner with them, and remain until the conclusion of the afternoon services.

Thus affairs continued until, one afternoon, about eight weeks after the death of Mrs. Welborn.

The inmates of Mrs. Tendem's pleasant dwelling were sitting sewing in her airy hall, when Minnie said, laughingly—

"I wonder who the attraction is that draws the old squire here so regularly every afternoon? We four must be a fascinating circle, in his estimation, or he would not come as often as he does; but I am beginning to suspect that we cannot all be equally attractive."

"The attraction cannot be in me, with my shaded eyes," said Mrs. Bridd.

"Nor in me," said Minnie, "with my distressing cough."

"O, he is so deaf, that your cough cannot distress him much."

"I think I am the magnet," said Rose, "for you know how fond he is of flowers."

At that moment the front gate opened, and Rose received her usual afternoon's floral offering, from her attentive old friend, the squire. After chatting pleasantly and equally with all four, about two hours, he left them.

The next day was Saturday; a busy day anywhere, among all good housekeepers, but particularly so with those in Pennsylvania. It was baking day. Mrs. Tendem was actively engaged in her neat, well kept kitchen; she was assisted by Rose in making bread, pies, custards and cakes—Rose thought—enough to last a month. After they were all done, and placed in the large, hot oven, built of masonry in the old fashion, Mrs. Tendem began to mix up a large fruit poundcake. This was something extra, and it excited Rose's curiosity.

"Grand-mother, do you expect company?"

"Your brothers are expected, you know."

"Yes, they may come to-day, but I do not think they will until next week."

"Still, they might come, and it is best to be well prepared."

After the poundcake was baked and cooled, Mrs. Tendem prepared some fine icing, with which she thickly coated it. She then decked and ornamented it with sundry delicate devices,

until it looked as if it had been manufactured by a skilful, city confectioner.

As she was about concluding the tedious operation, Minnie happened to pass through the kitchen, and seeing the handsomely prepared cake, she said :—

"Mother, what a beautiful cake you have made! Do you expect company?"

"Yes, I expect the honor of a visit from your two city sons."

"But you need not have gone to all that trouble for them. They would be glad to eat your cake without the icing."

"I choose to ice my cakes sometimes; they keep better."

After that, there was no more allusion made to the ornamented cake. About sunset the stage-coach passed, but the boys did not arrive. Supper was eaten without the cake. There were so many other good things on the table, that it was not needed.

The next day was Sunday. Mrs. T., Rose, and the squire, as usual, went to church, with their dinner in the carriage-box.

When it was time to expect them home, Minnie prepared an inviting little supper for them, in her mother's neat kitchen; then she and Mrs.

Bridd walked up and down the garden walks, watching for their return. They could see the road a long way off. They waited and watched for them full an hour, before they appeared, and were beginning to be alarmed about them.

"There they come, at last," said Minnie; "let us go to the front gate to meet them."

They went to the gate, but did not meet them, for the carriage, instead of stopping, as usual, to put out the ladies, passed the widow's home and went to the squire's.

"What is the meaning of that?" said Minnie, with her eyes full of amazement.

She was not kept long in suspense. Almost immediately, Rose tripped gaily into the back entrance of the house, and then quickly passed them, with the large poundcake in her hands, lightly covered with a snowy napkin. As she passed her mother she said:—

"My grand-mother, Mrs. Welborn, requests the pleasure of your own and Mrs. Bridd's company, up at the squire's, to help her eat her wedding supper."

"Stop! stop, Rose. Is your grand-mother really married to Squire Welborn?"

"Yes, ma'am; they were married this afternoon after church was out, and all the congrega-

tion had gone home. I acted as bridesmaid, and the clergyman's little son was groomsman. It was a childish affair, altogether, the clergyman's wife said; but we did not care what she said, we enjoyed it. Now, mother, do hurry and bring Mrs. Bridd up as fast as you can."

"Did you ever see the like of that?" said Minnie, turning towards Mrs. Bridd.

"I don't see anything, my dear; I wish I could see *how* a wedding can so soon replace a funeral."

"Well, well, I suppose the old gentleman was worried out of all manner of patience by Peggy's mismanagement."

"Of course, we must suppose something to excuse his inexcusable haste."

On the following Saturday Frank and Merton arrived; they found a large share of their grandmother's wedding cake awaiting their arrival, to welcome them to her new home. They spent a delightful week and a half in the country; tried their hands, by way of experiment, at farm work, but very soon relinquished it, as being much harder than their dull and monotonous store duties. They returned to the city, much refreshed by their excursion, and full of the praises of their "new old grand-father, and

their new young grand-mother," and of their splendid home on the bright Hillside Farm.

In October Mrs. Bridd's adopted son received a well maintained appointment in the city of Philadelphia. He immediately rented a neat dwelling, and furnished it very comfortably. He then paid Minnie a visit; at the end of the week he returned to the city, accompanied by his mother. Soon afterwards, he was married to a worthy young lady, whom he had long loved, and she was ever afterwards a faithful friend and daughter of Mrs. Bridd.

After that, Minnie and her daughter Rose lived in peace and comfort, in Mrs. Tendem's house. Not to be entirely dependent upon the generous liberality of the squire and his new wife, they procured fine needle work from the families of the neighboring farmers, by which they made a comfortable living, without being overtasked or hurried.

The neighbors talked and laughed a good deal about the squire's hasty wedding, but he paid them no attention, but went on

"The even tenor of his way,"

without halting to regard the "speech of people."

During a part of the following Winter, there was a long, severely cold spell of weather. The

sleighing was excellent in almost every part of Pennsylvania, and tolerably good even in Philadelphia. While it was at its best and hardest state, Mr. Welborn proposed the treat of a very long sleigh ride to his wife and her daughters. The proposal was hailed with delight by Rose, and thankfully accepted by Minnie.

It was on a bright, clear, but piercingly cold Monday morning, at an early hour, when they started. The landscape looked like a vast sheet of snow-white paper, on which fences, trees, houses, barns and bridges were drawn, in gray, brown and other colored lines. At about eleven o'clock they entered the hospitable mansion of one of Mr. Welborn's sons, and there they dined. Although it was not more than four o'clock when they prepared to take their departure, they were not permitted to go in peace until they had again been seated at a well furnished meal, which young Mrs. Welborn insisted upon calling their supper. At an hour after sunset, they arrived at the house of another Mr. Welborn, and there they were obliged to partake of another supper, for which they were in a much better state of preparation. There they remained all night. The next morning, after an early breakfast, they re-entered their sleigh, and rode very rapidly

until twelve o'clock; they then dined with Mr. Welborn's married daughter, rested their horses two hours, and then drove them at the top of their speed until sunset. They then rode to the door of my own house, in Silveryville. There Minnie and Rose alighted with their baskets and bags. Mr. and Mrs. Welborn continued their journey, two miles down the road, to visit Mr. Welborn's sister, where they remained a day and two nights. Minnie and Rose found me, with my knitting work beside me, in my own quiet home, listening in solitude, to the ticking melody of my dark, old clock in the corner. I was delighted to see my friends, and held with one a good, long, old times talk, and with the other a merry, lively, new times chat, until a late hour of the night; but neither the talk nor the chat could induce me to forget to provide for my unexpected visitors a substantial and nicely prepared supper. There they remained until the sleigh of Mr. Welborn called for them, and in it they proceeded to Philadelphia. Minnie was glad to see her friends and children, but she could not feel either happy or contented in Philadelphia. Every city sight and city sound seemed to convey to her mind the remembrance of some past

pang of agony and suffering; and she was heartily rejoiced when her face was turned towards her hillside home in the country.

They returned by a nearer route, on which, they called at the houses of various friends and relatives, by whom they were kindly received, and sumptuously entertained. The excursionists were delighted with their cold and bracing trip.

Minnie, while in the city, found she had manifold reasons for being pleased with and proud of her sons, Frank and Merton. They had joined the Sons of Temperance, and were therefore protected from the vice that had ruined their father. Patrick's course was steadily onward, and his business was well prospered. Mrs. Bridd was happy in her children, and was permitted to dispense with the green shade, but still unable to read or sew. Biddy and her husband, Jabez, did not prosper very well; they were still as poor as when they first began the world. Mr. and Mrs. Janes were rolling in wealth, and had quite ceased to recognise any of their poor or country relations.

It was Minnie's recent visit to me that had stirred up in my mind the remembrance of the events which are recorded on these pages. The

ones which I did not before know, were then committed to my confidence by Minnie.

Mrs. Guildhall is long since dead, and her beautiful villa over the bridge is owned and occupied by strangers. Mr. Guildhall is reduced to great poverty, living a dreary, childless old man, in a one roomed dwelling-place, on the outskirts of Philadelphia, where he is supported by the benevolence of his nearest relations. Should he survive them, he will probably end his career where he materially helped to drive Merton Malvers—in the palace home of the homeless—known as the poorhouse.

THE END.

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